

W A L T O L E

BY

JOHN MORLEY

First Edition 1889

Reprinted 1890, 1893, 1896, 1899, 1903, 1906, 1909

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
EARLY YEARS AND FIRST STAGES OF PUBLIC LIFE	1

CHAPTER II

THE LAST FOUR YEARS OF QUEEN ANNE	18
---	----

CHAPTER III

THE NEW REIGN - WHIG SCHISM	40
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

RISE TO POWER - BOLINGBROKE	61
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V

THE COURT	85
---------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII

FISCAL POLICY	166
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS	183
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X

FOREIGN POLICY	200
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

WALPOLE'S FALL	222
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS AND FIRST STAGES OF PUBLIC LIFE

WALPOLE was born in August 1676. He came fifth among nineteen children born to Mr. Robert Walpole, a country gentleman of Norfolk, of good estate and ancient lineage. The founder of the family had come over with William of Normandy, and the stock had shown its vigour by an unbroken descent in the male line for no fewer than eighteen generations. Walpoles had been knights of the shire as far back as Edward II. Edward Walpole, grandfather of the future minister, sat in the Convention Parliament of 1660. He is said to have acquired a respectable character for eloquence and weight; he voted for the restoration of Charles II, and he was made a Knight of the Bath. Robert, his son, was in Parliament from the Revolution until his death in 1700. An active Whig in politics, he was a man of marked prudence and credit in his private conduct. A

even if education could now have been obtained in those famous foundations, but because he designed the young man to push his fortunes in the Church, then the usual field for a cadet of decent family. But the youth had higher destinies before him than fat livings and an easy bishopric. His elder brother died in 1698, and Robert the younger, becoming heir to the family estates, quitted the university, and settled down with his convivial father to learn all that pertains to the management of land and the enjoyment of country life. It is said that Robert the elder used to insist on making his son drink more than his just share, on the ground that no son should ever be allowed to have enough of his senses to see that his father was tipsy. Amid such surroundings, which, though compared with the more polished surface of modern manners they seem coarse and rough, yet were vigorous, hearty, and practical, Walpole reached his twenty-fourth year. His father vowed that he would make him the first grazier in the country. Higher destinies were in store for him. The young squire, under a homely exterior, covered a powerful understanding, a strong will, a good eye for men, and a union of solid judgment with commanding ambition, which fitted him to rule a kingdom, and to take his place among the foremost men in Europe.

In the summer of 1700 he married Miss Catherine

Walpole came into the estate. Nearly the whole of it lay in the county of Norfolk, and as it was then let, the rent-roll amounted to something over two thousand pounds a year. The property carried with it a couple of pocket boroughs, Castle Rising and Lynn. Mr. Walpole was at once (January 1701) elected for the first of them, rendered vacant by his father's decease, and he retained the seat until the death of King William. In 1702, on the accession of Queen Anne, he was returned for Lynn Regis; he continued to sit for the same borough without interruption until his fall from power forty years later. It is sometimes said that the advance of democracy has destroyed this stability of relation between representatives and constituents; but it is worth noting that two members of the existing House of Commons (1889) have held what are virtually the same seats without a break, one of them for fifty-nine years, and the other for fifty-four.

The moment of Walpole's entrance upon parliamentary life was one of critical importance in national history. The great question which had been opened and provisionally closed by the events of 1688, was whether the English monarchy should be limited and Protestant, or absolute, Catholic, and dependent on France. The work of the Revolution may seem at this distance of time to have been out of danger by the beginning of the

resolution, first of the king, and then of the Whig leaders.

Walpole joined the Whigs in supporting the Act of Settlement, but he is not known to have taken part in debate. Personal emulation is stated to have been the spur that first made him a speaker. At Eton he had been the schoolfellow, if not the rival of a lad who was destined to one of the most singular careers in political history. St. John, better known by his later title of Bolingbroke, was two years younger than Walpole, and he entered Parliament about the same time. He had not been many months in the House of Commons before gifts of incomparable brilliancy brought him to the very front place among the debaters of his time. The occasion of Walpole's maiden speech is not known. All that is told is that he was confused and embarrassed, and failed to realise the expectations of his friends. He was followed by somebody more fluent than himself. "You may applaud the one," said an acute onlooker, "and ridicule the other, as much as you please ; but depend upon it, the spruce gentleman who made the set speech will never improve, and Walpole will in time become an excellent speaker." Walpole took pains to fulfil the prediction by relying on his native qualities ; he was active in business, attentive to all that went on, keen in observing men and watching

--in a subordinate post on the council of Prince George of Denmark. The appointment was made on the recommendation of no less important a personage than Marlborough. The prince was the queen's husband, and because he was the husband of the queen, he had been made Lord High Admiral of England. The naval board had provoked bitter complaints of mismanagement, negligence, and corruption, and the leading Whigs, not yet fully reconciled with the administration of Marlborough and Godolphin, whose transformation was still incomplete, actively echoed the outcry of the merchants against the Lord High Admiral and his advisers. Walpole said the best that could be said for his colleagues, and when he was reproached with the terrible sin of speaking against some of his own party, he answered with spirit that he would never be so mean as to sit at a board and not defend it. At the same time, as he had to defend the board, he did his best to improve it. In this inferior office he first showed those qualities of a great man of business which, along with his extraordinary general power of mind and character, afterwards made him a great minister. Godolphin, then the head of the government, was himself a man of business just short of the very first class. The contemporary authorities tell us that Walpole won his chief's admiration by his energy and punctuality in affairs,

House of Lords, numbering before the Union with Scotland about one hundred and ninety members, including the bishops and the Catholic peers who could not sit, contained the representatives of the great families who had made and guided the Revolution of 1688. Here, therefore, the Whigs held a uniform predominance. But they had no share in the leading posts of administration for three years after the accession of the queen. Marlborough and Godolphin were the two heads of Anne's first government, and they remained so until the great ministerial revolution in 1710. During this period of eight years the government passed through no fewer than three important changes. First Marlborough and Godolphin were joined by the high Tories, with the Earl of Nottingham at their head. Then in 1704 the high Tories were displaced, and Godolphin took in the more moderate and, we must add, the more unprincipled section of the same party, in the persons of Harley and St. John. They were brought in as the particular friends of Marlborough, and were meant by him to balance the Whig influence of Cowper and Sunderland. It was to be not government by parties, but government by groups. Finally, the General and the Treasurer, as the two leaders were called, found themselves slowly driven to look in the Whig direction, and in 1706 they pressed the Earl of Sunderland into

any subordinate position privately irksome to him. He began, in Bishop Burnet's phrase, to set up for himself, and to act no more under the direction of the Lord Treasurer. Where anything was to be got, said his bitterest enemy in later years, Harley always knew how to wriggle himself in; when any misfortune threatened, he knew how to wriggle himself out. A bedchamber revolution helped him. The Treasurer and the General soon discovered Harley's practices; they went to the queen, and finding her unwilling to part with him, declared themselves bound to quit her service. The scene that followed is a curious example of the difference in ministerial procedure between that time and our own. The day was Sunday, and a Cabinet council had already been summoned. The queen in those days sat at their meetings, just as she systematically attended on all important discussions in the House of Lords, and was even upon one occasion personally appealed to by Marlborough in the course of the debate in that chamber. After Marlborough and Godolphin had left the presence, Anne immediately went to the Cabinet council. "Harley," says Burnet, "opened some matters relating to foreign affairs: the whole board was very uneasy; the Duke of Somerset said he did not see how they could deliberate on such matters, since the General was not with them; he repeated this

Harley would go. Anne's resentment was deep, and though she was obliged to take the two leaders back into her service, they never recovered either her favour or her confidence. The important fact during the first eight years of the reign of Queen Anne is not that the administration was first Tory, then composite of Whig and Tory, and in its final stage pure Whig, but that it was in all its stages, whether Whig or Tory, a Marlborough administration, seconding the policy, providing means for the projects, and devoted to the person of that great and powerful genius.

This was the most important of the three changes that preceded the great party revolution of the last four years of the reign. It brought about that government by a particular political connection which Burke some sixty years later singled out as the grand illustration, furnished by one of the most fortunate periods in our history, of the virtue of Party. "These wise men," he said, "for such I must call Lord Sunderland, Lord Godolphin, Lord Somers, and Lord Marlborough, were too well principled in those maxims upon which the whole fabric of public strength is built, to be blown off their ground by the breath of every childish talker. They were not afraid that they should be called an ambitious junto ; or that their resolution to stand or fall

made Secretary for War in the room of St. John.

The Lord Treasurer was far from being a mere figure-head. Godolphin was one of the men of a type that a great revolution seldom fails to throw up—silent, able, pliant, assiduous, indispensable. He was the younger son of a Cornish gentleman. The Godolphins made their first appearance in public life in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and the fortunes and influence of their house grew so rapidly that throughout the seventeenth century their only rivals in Cornwall were the Grenvilles.¹ It was to the head of the house of Godolphin, as his most honoured friend, that Hobbes dedicated the *Leviathan*. His brother, Sidney, is described by Clarendon as a young gentleman of incomparable parts, who being of delicate education and constitution, and unacquainted with contentions, upon his observation in the House of Commons of the wickedness of the king's enemies, out of the pure indignation of his soul and conscience to his country, engaged himself with the royalists. The Sidney Godolphin of Queen Anne was of less delicate mould. He began his career as a page in the household of Charles II, and at the same time, oddly enough, he had, like Harley, entered the House of Commons as member for one of the twenty-two parliamentary constituencies which Corn-

¹ See p. 45 of Mr. W. Pridaux Courtney's *Parliamentary Repre-*

used to say of him, that Sidney Godolphin was never in the way and never out of the way. He guarded the public treasury with the jealous watchfulness of a miser over his hoard. He resisted a job, even when it was backed by the mighty influence of Marlborough, and when he sanctioned a warrant for the supply of a new silver trumpet for a troop of the Guards, he minuted it with an inquiry what had become of the old one. All governments were equally indifferent to him, and he took care not to make himself impossible either at Kensington or St. Germain. Before the death of Charles II, Godolphin had risen to be a peer and First Commissioner of the Treasury. James II made him chamberlain to the queen, and he was often bitterly reproached in after years for the exuberant complacency with which he had attended his royal mistress to her papistical devotions. After William of Orange had landed, and James was about to leave Whitehall, Godolphin was one of the five Lords whom he left to represent him in his absence. This did not prevent him from immediately acquiring in turn the confidence of King William, or from resuming his post at the Treasury, the one Tory in a Whig administration. Then for a while he withdrew, but before long he was again First Commissioner, and while he was thus the trusted servant of William, he secretly took pains to avoid

It did not prevent Pope from praising Patriotic's hand unstained, his uncorrupted heart, his comprehensive head (*Moral Essays*, i. 80). By a strange paradox, the most solid and precise financier of his day was one of the most inveterate gamblers: "His pride was in piquet, New-market fame, and judgment at a bet." It delivered him, he said, from the necessity of talking. Godolphin was at least free from the vice of personal rapacity. His probity at the Exchequer was absolutely unstained. When he died, after more than five and twenty years of nearly continuous public employment, he left no larger sum behind him than twelve thousand pounds. It has been justly contended on his behalf that a financier who could year after year raise the vast sums that were required for Marlborough's great campaigns without public disturbance, and without serious detriment to the national credit, must have been a minister of extraordinary skill, capacity, and resource.

Besides this strong testimony to his ability, Godolphin's ministry will always be remembered in connection with one domestic event of the highest degree of political importance: I mean the incorporating union between England and Scotland. This was a transaction that abounded in delicate issues. Many sober judges despaired of ever seeing the consummation of so momentous a treaty. Those who were most sanguine

Act approving and ratifying the Treaty of Union between the two kingdoms henceforth to be known as Great Britain.

The immediate consequences of the measure were not favourable to the ministers who carried it. The Union involved the admission of Presbyterians to Parliament, and this strengthened the cry, which was so loud during the first fifteen years of the century, that the Church was in danger. The exclusion of Harley, St. John, and the Tories from government had sent the Church over into violent opposition. The disappearance of the measure against Occasional Conformity heightened the alarm, and an Act (1709) for nationalising all foreign Protestants who had settled in England, was full of offence to the inflamed partisans of a national Establishment. At the general election of 1705 the clergy and the universities had spread over the country tragic apprehensions of the danger of the Church, but Marlborough's victories were an irresistible argument on the other side. In the general election three years later,—for the reader will not forget that this was the time of triennial Parliaments,—the drum ecclesiastic had again been beaten, with no better result to the High Churchmen in Parliament. A reaction was near at hand, and prudent observers like Walpole may well have foreseen it.

The tide was undoubtedly setting against the Whigs.

crisis came rapidly to a head in a wholly unexpected form. In disturbed times an important feature is the calendar of political fasts and festivals. The commemoration of anniversaries has always marked dangerous moments in the last hundred years of French government, and on a humbler scale in the annals of Ireland since the Union. The political saints'-days in England in the reign of Anne were the 30th January, the date of the martyrdom of the blessed King Charles I; the 29th May, the birthday and the day of the restoration of his blessed son, King Charles II; and the 5th November, the day on which, in 1605, the king and the three estates of the realm had their wonderful escape from the most traitorous and bloodily-intended massacre by gunpowder, - and the day on which also, by a striking coincidence, William of Orange had landed at Torbay eighty-three years later for the deliverance of our Church and nation. Sermons on these famous dates then, and for many years to come, gave an opportunity too good to be lost for talking violent politics. A sermon at St. Paul's was like a modern demonstration in Hyde Park, and the great controversy between Hoadley, of St. Peter-le-Poer, and Blackhall, of St. Mary Aldermary, excited the same kind of interest as Newport programmes and Midlothian manifestoes. Dr. Price's discourse at the dissenting

side. Addison had been his contemporary and friend at Magdalen, and is supposed to have dedicated one of his early poems to him. In a sermon in 1702 he had boasted that he hung out "a bloody flag and banner of defiance" against all dissenters, and the pleasant phrase gave lively satisfaction to his friends. His historic discourse at St. Paul's on November 5th, 1709, is vehement, heated, and uncompromising, and it contains much strong language about dissenters, and the false brethren who connived at dissent; but it hardly deserves to be dismissed as absurd and scurrilous. It was a bold declaration, without qualification or exception, of the general principle of passive obedience and non-resistance to government, with practical inuendoes that pointed unmistakably against the whole revolution settlement. The Lord Mayor, who was among the congregation at St. Paul's, and who was a Tory member of Parliament, thanked the preacher for his sermon, took him home to dinner, urged him to publish it, and accepted the dedication. Forty thousand copies found buyers.

The government felt that this was an attack on the existing order that could not be passed over. Marlborough, Somers, and Walpole inclined to the view that it might be left to an ordinary prosecution at law. Godolphin, however, stung by a nickname cast upon

The error was not wholly without excuse. The great constitutional battle was not yet secure, and if Sacheverell's sermon meant anything, it meant condemnation of the principles of the Revolution, of the settlement of the Crown, and of the Act and the policy of Toleration. Historians, looking merely to the result, are for the most part of opinion that the impeachment was impolitic and a blunder. Burke, on the contrary, in whose political circle all the circumstances of the fall of the Whigs in 1710 must have remained as a living tradition, seems to approve of the impeachment. It seldom happens to a party, he says in a familiar passage of the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, to have the opportunity of a clear, authentic, recorded declaration of their political tenets upon the subject of a great constitutional event. The Whigs made that opportunity. "The impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell was undertaken by a Whig ministry and a Whig House of Commons, and carried on before a prevalent and steady majority of Whig peers. It was carried on for the express purpose of stating the true grounds and principles of the Revolution. It was carried on for the purpose of condensing the principles on which the Revolution was first opposed and afterwards calumniated, in order by a juridical sentence of the highest authority to confirm and fix Whig principles, as they had operated both in the resistance to King James,

the step in council, he was its most energetic agent in the House of Commons. His arguments and those of his colleagues on one side, taken along with those of Sir Simon Harcourt and Bishop Atterbury on the other side (if Atterbury was the author of the Doctor's speech in his own defence), are a complete and satisfactory presentation of the two party positions.

The commotion itself has been so often described that it is unnecessary to tell over again here how Sacheverell became the hero of the hour; how each day during the three weeks of his trial he was attended by an immense crowd of zealous admirers rending the air with their huzzas, and struggling to kiss his hand as he went from his lodging in the Temple along the Strand to Westminster Hall; how his effigies were sold in every street; how his health was drunk before the queen's, and in the same glass with that of the Church; how the London mob attacked meeting-houses, burned the pews and furniture, and maltreated all who would not shout as they did; and how they pressed round the queen herself in her sedan chair at the door of Westminster Hall, crying, "God bless your majesty and the Church, we hope your majesty is for Dr. Sacheverell." He was as popular in the provinces as in the capital; his journey through the midlands to a living in Shropshire was like a royal progress; and the booksellers sold more copies of his trial than of anything since Dryden's *Absalom and*

modern days. When the trial was over, the Lords decreed that he should be suspended from preaching for three years, and that his sermon should be publicly burnt, along with some other obnoxious matters and things, in the presence of the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs of London.

Walpole published a pamphlet in the shape of four letters on this whole transaction, when all was over; proving "in clear and familiar language, and by a plain but strong deduction of reasoning, that the abettors of Sacheverell were the abettors of the Pretender; and that those who agreed with him to condemn such resistance as dethroned the father, could have no other meaning than the restoration of the son." What was much more important was the practical moral that was drawn by Walpole for his own use. It gave him an aversion and horror at any interposition in the affairs of the Church, and led him to assume occasionally a line of conduct which appeared even to militate against those principles of general toleration to which he was naturally and by creed inclined.

CHAPTER II

THE LAST FOUR YEARS OF QUEEN ANNE

EMBOLDENED by this extraordinary manifestation of sentiments with which she was privately in such sympathy, the queen proceeded to change her ministers with as much eagerness as George III showed in doing Mr. Fox on the defeat of his India Bill in 1783. Her new advisers did not at once dare to displace Marlborough from his command, but with that important exception the administration was substantially changed. At first taking only the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, was the mainspring of the new government, and was shortly installed as Lord Treasurer. He was first Lord Keeper and then Lord Chancellor. Lord Rochester was made President of the Council. The most important of all the appointments was that of John as Secretary of State. It is interesting to note that this is the last occasion on which a prelate of the Church was made a member of a government. The Bishop of Bristol became Lord Privy Seal.

The general election of 1710 was conducted with extraordinary violence, especially in the large towns. Boisterous crowds barred the way to the polling places, and in many places there was open, flagrant, and

head of the agitation. They filled their sermons with inflammatory topics; they went about from house to house pressing their flocks to show on this great occasion their zeal for the Church; they assured them that now or never was the time to deliver their queen from the bondage in which her late ministers had kept her. The result was a great victory for the new men. When people tell us that our present popular franchise is responsible for what are styled the violent turnover majorities of the last twenty years, it is well to remember that fluctuations at least as remarkable took place on the old system in the exciting and critical decade at the beginning of the last century. There has never been a more rapid electoral transition than that from the great Whig majority in 1708, to the great Tory majority in 1710. Two hundred and seventy members lost their seats. The installation of the Tory ministry was the first strong attempt to break the Whig chain, the first vigorous effort in the long struggle between the Crown and that party, which did not finally close until the victory of the younger Pitt over Fox in 1784. Ranke has justly observed that Queen Anne's last administration is what gives her reign its marked character in English history.

One of the first measures in the new Parliament was a vindictive attack, according to the fierce spirit of the time, upon the fallen ministers. Serious efforts had

ment. The sovereign was still free to man each
ment of state as she thought fit, without payi
attention than she pleased to the wishes of h
adviser, or to the relations of a given minister
colleagues. The collective feeling and princip
is the foundation of the modern Cabinet did n
exist. Harley from the outset looked for Whi
protect him against the highfliers among his ow
He gave it out that "a Whig game was inte
bottom," and made earnest advances to Walpole
him that he was as good as half of his party
gether. Walpole was too long-headed to ac
flattering invitation. His strong and straight
mind had already grasped the cardinal truth
was no longer possible for a mixed and ec
government to deal with the immense difficultie
time, and that only a vigorous, concentrated, a
tinuous administration could be trusted to br
country through its dangers. He refused Harle
citations, though, by a singular variation from
official usage, he retained for several months a
Whig ministry had been broken up the plac
surer of the navy, which he had held along v
office of Secretary for War.

When the majority had opened their great at
Godolphin's management of the public purse.

was that he had corruptly received a thousand pounds in connection with a contract for forage while he was Secretary for War. It was resolved (January 1712) that Mr. Walpole had been guilty of a high breach of trust and notorious corruption, that he should be committed to the Tower, and that he should be expelled from the House and disqualified for re-election during the Parliament. Notwithstanding this resolution the borough of Lynn at once proceeded again to elect him, and he was again expelled, thus furnishing the closest precedent to the more famous constitutional case of Wilkes and the electors of Middlesex sixty years afterwards. Walpole published a strenuous vindication of himself while he lay in the Tower, but it is not satisfactory according to the salutary rigour of modern standards of administrative purity. He had undoubtedly not received a shilling for himself out of the contract, but he had bargained that his friend should receive a share in it, and the contractors had bought out the friend by payment of a thousand pounds. We should all be horrified at such good nature at the public expense in any modern minister, but the fact that Walpole made no personal gain completely exonerated him with his contemporaries.

Upon his release at the close of the session, Walpole was much too keen a party man, and too honestly in-

dying at one of the houses of the Duchess of
borough at St. Albans (1712); and that the old
man, pointing to Walpole, urged her never to
him, "for if souls are permitted to return to the
I will appear to reproach you for your conduct."

The great achievement of the Tory administration
the Peace of Utrecht (1713). "I am afraid," says
broke with cynical frankness, "that we came to
the same dispositions as all parties have done; that
principal spring of our actions was to have the
ment of the state in our hands; that our principles
were the conservation of this power, great emblems
to ourselves, and great opportunities of rewarding
who had helped to raise us, and of hurting the
stood in opposition to us." At the same time
that the Peace, though the only solid foundation
Tory system, was also a necessity and a blessing
for the country and for Europe. No transaction
our annals has ever given rise to more violent
protracted disputes. It is one of the landmarks
European history, like the treaties of Munster
seventeenth century, of Paris and of Versailles
eighteenth, and of Vienna in the nineteenth. It
an astonishing aggrandisement of the position of
in Europe, it made wider room for her political
trade in the New World, and it inflicted sufficient

complex, with such diverse interests, had won year after year a series of mighty victories over the French, which can only be compared to the crushing defeats inflicted on the European monarchies a hundred years later by Napoleon Bonaparte. At the moment when Queen Anne dismissed Godolphin, the great English general had Louis XIV at his mercy. With the fall of the Whigs all was changed. France once more raised her head. The allies heard the news from London with profound dismay. The Dutch exchanged their ordinary phlegm for anger and consternation. But Bolingbroke and Harley did not shrink. The victorious soldier, whose career for so many years had been an unbroken tale of triumph in marches, sieges, battles, and negotiations, was dismissed from his commands, as if he were the worst of public offenders, instead of being the deliverer of Europe and the glory of his country. The deposition of Marlborough was as truly one chief aim in pushing the Peace of Utrecht, as one chief aim in the Peace of Paris fifty years later was the deposition of Pitt. In days of a settled dynasty like our own, it is hard to realise the apprehensions inspired by Marlborough's ascendancy. But in 1710 Oliver Cromwell had been dead little more than fifty years. Men were nearer to the Protectorate than we are to the great Reform Bill. All the circumstances of the Protectorate were living facts in the memory of the nation. There

an unwise moment, pressed the queen to make him Captain-General for life. So extraordinary a career was thoroughly calculated to exalt his imagination and inflame his ambition. It was true that he would have no successor in the male line, and this, among other things, made the shrewder Tories doubtful about the existence of the boundless designs that were freely imputed to him by the bulk of their party. Such dark suspicions as these, however, were not needed to establish the advantage of pulling down the man who was the chief tower of Whig strength.

The Opposition were quite as keenly alive to the party aspects of the Peace as were the government. They assailed the Treaties, Walpole among the foremost, with a vehemence that has never been surpassed. We were breaking, they said, our most solemn engagements with the allies. We were betraying the Dutch. We were still leaving the crowns of France and Spain on the heads of two princes of the House of Bourbon. We had covered ourselves with dishonour; we had flung away the fruits of twelve years of struggle and of victory; and we had wantonly, shamefully, and wickedly rejected the opportunity of once for all delivering Protestant England and Protestant Holland from the pretensions at once of the Most Christian and of the Most Catholic king.

Nobody can dispute that the Whigs had that supreme

and duplicity that was worthy of ancient Greece or mediæval Italy. Even Frederick the Great never did anything so base as the statesmen who sent their general to Holland with express instructions actually to checkmate their own ally on the very field of battle. Bolingbroke's methods must be stamped by every impartial historian with indelible infamy. The betrayal and abandonment of the Catalans was truly criminal. But on the merits, and viewed in the light of subsequent events, the Peace must be pronounced to have been the true policy. It is ridiculous to attribute to Bolingbroke or his party the fruits of the Peace. The fruits were gathered at Utrecht, but they had been secured by twelve years of war. The sacrifices of England were in some degree repaid by the extension of her possessions. She retained from Spain the famous rock of Gibraltar, Port Mahon and the Isle of Minorea. France surrendered Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Hudson's Bay. The fortifications of Dunkirk were to be dismantled. By a provision which to-day is regarded with horror, England was to be allowed to supply the Spanish possessions in America with negro slaves. More respectable clauses were those which extorted from the bigoted king the release of subjects who had been cast into prison for their religion, and a definite recognition of the Protestant line in Great Britain, as well as the expulsion of the Pretender

the next hundred years, ascended from the 13th chair to be heads of government.¹ When the administration was formed, the Treasury was a commission, but not many months later Harley, already been stated, was made Lord High Treasurer, left the House of Commons, became the Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and finally received the distinction of the Garter.

The ministers had come in upon the flood-tide of great reaction. Experience has often shown the danger of these triumphant situations. The new men soon found themselves in difficulties. The queen's desire had been to break up the Whig junto, to break up government by party, and by ending the war to destroy the towering ascendancy of Marlborough. Harley, in three years of back-stairs intrigue, had instilled in the troubled mind designs of no wider scope than this. The views of the new Parliament were very different. Harley had no patience with schemes of moderation and compromise. "We are plagued here," Swift wrote Stella, "with an October Club; that is, a set of about a hundred Parliament men of the country, who

¹ The other three were Sir Spencer Compton, who as Lord Wilmington succeeded Walpole in 1742; Addington, who went directly from Speakership to Premiership, in succession to Fox in 1801; and William Grenville, who was Speaker for a few years in 1789, and became Prime Minister in 1789.

out of the others' hands." (18th February 1711.) Between the jealous murmurs of these men of the October Club who wanted the heads of their enemies, and the pertinacity of the queen, who would not stir beyond the point first marked out for her, Harley had a hard game to play, and it soon appeared that he was not the man to play it.

The savage and unholy genius of Swift had appeared early on the scene. Exasperated at the failure of his Whig friends to fulfil their promises of church preferment, he had been willingly caught by the attentions and the flatteries of the Tory chiefs. "We were determined to have you," said St. John. "You were the only one we were afraid of." So they had him, his potent mind, his virile and ingenious style, his irony, his penetration, his truculence, his hate--all was henceforth at the service of his new patrons. The history of polemical journalism records nothing more effective for their purpose than the sallies for attack and for defence made by Swift, along with Prior, Parnell, and Defoe, against forces which counted Steele and Addison. Never before nor since were so many authors of classics which the world will not willingly let die, engaged on ephemeral pieces which the world willingly lets die on the next morning. Addison rose or fell from the ranks of letters to be a

achieved the position of personal ascendancy which Swift's under the Tory administration of Queen Anne. He was a central figure at levees and drawings and the hero of the ministers' ante-room. He was invited to Cabinet dinners, they called him Jonathan, he came down to Windsor alone with Harley in his coach, he thought he was in all the secrets. In truth he was the dupe of his great friends. They told him as much as was necessary for his pamphlets and his articles, and told him no more. He never knew, for instance, of Prior's clandestine mission to France, and to the last he positively denied that there had been a whole intrigue with the Court of St. Germain.

Swift tells how he dined with Bolingbroke and Harcourt at Harley's table in the infancy of their power, and he could not forbear taking notice of the manner in which they bore to one another. The first excitement of a new-made Cabinet is said to be singularly intoxicating, but the excitement does not last. Swift speedily had the mortification of seeing this kindness between his friends first degenerate into indifference and suspicion, and then corrupt into the greatest animosity and hatred. The truth is that, from Swift's own accounts of Harley, in spite of the writer's strong and lasting partiality for him, that Lord Treasurer had none of the gifts of a great man. He was hesitating, evasive, timid, promising, and

the queen's favourite. He allowed the queen to become alienated and sullen, without making an effort to remove the causes. He took no pains to please his colleagues. His temper, he once told Godolphin, was to go along with the company and give no inconvenience. "If they should say Harrow-on-the-Hill or by Maidenhead were the nearest way to Windsor, I should go with them, and never dispute it, if that would give content, and that I might not be pressed to swear it was so." This was true enough of his words, but he forgot that though he would not dispute about the road, in act he was always scheming to withdraw the lynch-pin and to upset the coach, and his travelling companions knew it. The Whig Lord Chancellor Cowper notes in his diary how one day he was drinking healths with Harley in some Tokay which was good but thick, and how he said to Harley that his white Lisbon wine would have been better, as being very clear. The company took it for a jest at "that humour of his, which was never to deal clearly or openly, but always with reserve if not dissimulation, or rather simulation, and to love tricks where not necessary, but from an inward satisfaction he took in applauding his own cunning. If any man was ever born under a necessity of being a knave, he was." Without going to such lengths as this, under the ordeal of leadership his colleagues found

broke's intrepidity and dispatch, for nothing irritating to a man who has much ambition with industry, as the sight of energy and application in or a fancied rival. He soon presented to the world most miserable of all sights, a minister called to great affairs, with the pitiful equipment of a misjudgment and a sluggish will. On the other hand the day of disgrace and peril came, Oxford showed composure and courage. When his fall had been certain, Swift, notwithstanding grievances of his own Oxford, praised him for fortitude and magnanimity maintained that he was the ablest and faithfullest and truest lover of his country that the age had produced.

The events of the last few months of the reign of Queen Anne from the autumn of 1713 to the summer of the following year, are a striking dramatic illustration of the trite moralities that spring from the vanity of things. People assume that when men are concerned in high affairs, their motives must lie deep and their reach far. Few who have ever been close to business, its hurries, chances, obscurities, egotisms, fall in with any such belief. These very transactions draw from Swift the observation, so obvious, so so constantly forgotten, what a lesson of humility is to mankind to behold the habits and passions

plained it in a famous sentence, which is perhaps as true of the House of Commons to-day as it was then. "Men there," he said, "grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged." The common account of the two ministers is that Oxford was a trifler and Bolingbroke a knave. Bolingbroke's own theory was that Oxford had no deep ambition and no policy beyond petty objects of domestic aggrandisement, and he listened with incredulous disgust while Oxford grew maudlin over his claret in recounting the imaginary glories of his ancestral house. Yet Bolingbroke, too, must have been a trifler to quit the true scene of authority for the sake of reviving the historic honours of his family. He chose to desire the title of an earl, partly because an earldom in his name and family had lately become extinct, but still more because Oxford had been raised to that rank. This weak sacrifice of the substance of power for the shadow of decoration, brought him nothing but mischief. Swift had been called over from Dublin in the summer of 1713 to try to compose their dissensions. He was almost the only common friend who was left to them. Towards the end of the year he thought he had done wonders when he had contrived to get them to go to an audience at Windsor together in the same coach, without other company, and with four hours in which

ciliation between them, he should leave London. going he wished to ask them, first, whether their chiefs might not be remedied in two minutes; and whether on the present footing the Ministry would be infallibly ruined in two months. Bolingbroke yes to both questions; but the Treasurer, "in manner, evaded both, and only desired me to dine with him next day." Swift abruptly refused the dinner and at once departed into Berkshire. There he remained until all was over. No domestic business was done, no attention was paid to affairs abroad. Each party witnessed a new plot. The rivals seem neither to respect themselves nor one another. Oxford and Bolingbroke continued to eat and drink and walk together as if no disagreement existed, and when they parted they used such names of one another as politicians could have borne without cutting one another's throats. Even at the very end, the pair supped together at Lady Masham's after one of their most violent quarrels. It is almost incredible that ministers with issues at stake, nursing serious purposes in their hearts, and with the certainty of the crisis being close at hand should have been capable of such lethargy and levity.

The truth is that the game, as Swift called it, was hard not only for Harley but for all the rest of

was more certain than that there was at this time no formed design in the party, whatever views some particular men might have, against the accession of King George. In the whole four years of his intimacy with ministers, Swift vows that he never heard one single word in favour of the Pretender. The entire imputation was nothing else but a device of opposition. He often, he says, asked men in the Whig camp whether they did really suspect either the queen or her servants of having favourable regards towards the Pretender, and they all said no. More particularly one person, afterwards in great employment, frankly told him, "You set up the Church and Sacheverell against us, and we set up Trade and the Pretender against you."

Yet it is now beyond all doubt that both Oxford to a certain extent, and Bolingbroke very deeply, were engaged in intrigues with the Pretender's agents. Bolingbroke was quite aware of the desperate insecurity of a restoration policy. The public was in as inconsistent a frame of mind as either Oxford or Bolingbroke. As Lord Stanhope has justly remarked, the country, with wonderful blindness, resolutely adhered at the same time to a Protestant king and to Jacobite ministers. They prayed devoutly for the Electress Sophia, and burnt in effigy the pope, the devil, and the Pretender; yet they supported a Parliament that suffered no

power, or to return to it, lay in a reconciliation between them and the Elector, and reconciliation was impossible. Yet the statesman who had mastered all the intricate difficulties of Utrecht, might be excused for doing that he was strong enough and adroit enough to overcome even the obstacles to a legitimist restoration.

In a sense it would be true to say that it was the fidelity of the Tories to their Church that baffled the legitimist plot, saved the Protestant succession, and secured a parliamentary constitution. What mattered Swift, and the bulk of Tories more typical than Swift, cared about was the Church. The Church was to be preserved entire in all her rights, powers, and privileges. All views on government contrary to her were to be discouraged by law, and all her enemies and sects to be kept under due subjection. The dissenter of any denomination was to be trusted with the smallest degree of civil or military power; the Whig, low churchman, republican, moderate, or the like, was to receive any mark of favour from the Crown. Why should not the Hanoverians be induced to come into these views, and why should not they make terms with them? Why should not the grandson of the Electress be invited over to be educated in England, to learn our manners and language, and become acquainted with the true constitution in

cept the man who would have to execute it. Advice of this kind, which would be perfectly wise if only some vital condition happened to be totally different, is plentifully bestowed upon all party leaders in every generation. To make overtures to Hanover would be to give deadly offence to the queen, and to exasperate the Tory highfliers. It would be to run upon the rock that had wrecked Oxford, and in effect to throw away the most valuable weapon in the war against Oxford. Having no settled principles either way, and moved solely by personal ambition, Bolingbroke was driven towards Jacobitism by the nature of the political position. Whether Bolingbroke and Ormond were caballing with the agents of the Pretender merely with the view of procuring the dismissal of Oxford and making sure of Jacobite support, or were seriously aiming at a legitimist restoration, it was on either theory the urgent duty of the Whigs to exercise unsleeping vigilance. Happily for us they did not relax nor falter, and happily for Walpole the peril and distraction of that time made so deep a mark on his party, that almost to the close of his career he always found a potent argument for party fidelity at a pinch, in a reminder of the last four years of Queen Anne.

The Tories pressed on their policy. They had secured

test. This was not all. Bolingbroke, or less, in conjunction with Atterbury, who was churchman and more, now crowned the edifice of tolerance and exclusion by the Schism Act, prohibiting the dissenters from educating their children. Walpole led a vehement resistance to this odious measure, but in vain. The dissenters were prevented from keeping public or private schools. They were shut out from the universities. By the law of occasional conformity, they were shut out from corporations. If Bolingbroke could have had the right to deprive them of the parliamentary franchise, and the right of sitting in the House of Commons, he would have completed his grand object. The landed gentry and the Crown would have become the possessors of supreme authority, and the party system would have been extinguished by the permanent instalment of one power. The position was curiously like that of Louis Philippe, Duke de Broglie and the party of moral order and Christian monarchy in 1873.

The end arrived with dramatic swiftness. The fatal blow was declared against Oxford; she told him roundly that she never had done the queen any service, and that she would. The queen was slow to act. The fatal institution, said Bolingbroke, which was inherent in the race hung about her. At length her torpid will was roused, and she broke into bitter remembrance of

Treasurer was committed to deliver up the white staff of his office. He had been led to expect that his fall would be broken by a dukedom and a pension; he got neither, but was dismissed peremptorily and with every circumstance of ignominy and mortification. But Bolingbroke's triumph was short. The queen, bewildered, stunned, and worn out by the animosity and confusion that raged around her, suffered an apoplectic seizure. For five days she lay at Kensington only half-conscious.

The country was in keen suspense, with all the omens of a rapidly approaching civil war. There was a revival of the temper of 1682, when the Whigs, in disgust at the actual oppressions of Charles II and the threatened tyranny of James, had revolved plans of open rebellion, and prepared risings in arms at London, Bristol, and Newcastle. French refugee officers were ready to act under the orders of General Stanhope. Marlborough, then at Antwerp, was persuading the Dutch to send ships and men to aid the Protestant cause. He had made his preparations for an invasion, though it is doubtful whether he was not more likely to play the part of General Monk than of William the deliverer. In the Tory camp there was equal alertness. The military posts were manned by officers of the right principles. Bolingbroke prepared his list of appointments. He was for a government exclusively of Jacobites, including Bishop

lord," he said to Bolingbroke, "what is to be done?" The eager partisan found his leader in a palsy of indecision.

The queen had no further part to play on the sublunary stage. The white staff had not yet been settled. On Friday, 30th July, the political committee of the Privy Council, sitting at the Cockpit at Whitehall, were summoned to Kensington by urgent representations of the queen's dangerous condition. While they were seated, two Whig peers, the Dukes of Argyll and Somerset, entered the room. As Privy Councillors they were within their technical right, though the fact of their using it shows how little the modern practice of the Cabinet was yet established. The physicians were summoned, and they reported that the queen's case was desperate. It was then agreed to recommend her to appoint the Duke of Shrewsbury to be Lord Treasurer. There is some reason for supposing that this step was taken on the proposition of Bolingbroke himself. He had perceived some time before that his character was too bad to carry the great ensign of power, but he felt that his ability would secure supreme authority whether with or without the wand. They approached the bedside of the dying sovereign. Rousing herself from her lethargy, she handed to Shrewsbury the white staff for which, or for the power

my dear brother!" She only lived a day longer. "Sleep," wrote Arbuthnot to Swift, "was never more welcome to a weary traveller than death to her." To Swift also Bolingbroke wrote, two days after the cup had been dashed from his lips: "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us." "It is true, my lord," replied Swift; "the events of five days last week might furnish morals for another volume of Seneca." The artful fabric of policy and of party, in which all the crafty calculations, the fierce passions, the glowing hopes and confident ambitions of so many busy, powerful, and ardent minds had been for four years so eagerly concentrated, was in a single moment dashed to pieces. A century and a quarter elapsed before a queen again reigned over the British realm. The next memorable historic scene within the walls of the palace at Kensington was on that summer morning in 1837, when the young Princess Victoria, before a captain as great as Marlborough, and counsellors of a higher and purer stamp than the baffled intriguers who hovered round the deathbed of Anne, went through the first ceremonial of the most fortunate reign in English history.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW REIGN—WHIG SCHISM

THE accession of the house of Hanover in the person of the great-grandson of James I. was once called by a Whig of this generation the greatest miracle in our history. It took place without domestic or foreign disturbance. Louis XIV was now in his seventy-eighth year, and his orb was sinking over a weak, impoverished, and depopulated kingdom. Even he did not dare to expose himself to the hazards of a new war with Great Britain. Within our own borders a short lull followed the sharp agitations of the last six months. The new king appointed an exclusively Whig Ministry. The office of Lord Treasurer was not revived, and the title disappears from political history. Lord Townshend was made principal Secretary of State, and assumed the part of first Minister. Mr. Walpole took the subaltern office of paymaster of the forces, holding along with it the paymastership of Chelsea Hospital. Although he had at first no seat in the inner Council or Cabinet, which seems to have consisted of eight members, he was

himself. In little more than a year (October 1715) he had made himself so prominent and valuable in the House of Commons, that the opportunity of a vacancy was taken to appoint him to be First Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Halifax and Lord Carlisle had in turn preceded him in the latter office. Since Walpole, save for a few months after Stanhope accepted a peerage in 1717, and before Aislabie succeeded him in 1718, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has always been in the House of Commons, a change that marked one further stage in the growing ascendancy of the representative and the taxing chamber.

Historians have sometimes urged that Townshend and Walpole ought now to have advised the king to bring a section of Tories into the Ministry. At that date, at any rate, a policy of inclusion seems to have been practically out of the question. Passion had risen to far too high a degree of heat and violence to allow of the composition of a mixed government, even if a mixed government had been desirable. But in the interest of the national settlement, nothing could have been less desirable. A struggle for life and death had just been

approaching insurrection, with a divided, lukewarm, uncertain Cabinet. Experience both before and after Walpole's era was entirely adverse to mixed governments. William III tried it on two occasions, and each time it was the judgment of the best observers that the admission to place of men of doubtful allegiance had added to his troubles. Anne tried it from 1702 to 1708, and Marlborough and Godolphin found the system incomplete. George II tried it when Walpole had appeared, and no attempt to make a strong government was less successful than that made on the principle of the Broad Bottom. If ever there was a time when a comprehension, even on a small scale, would have been at once perilous and futile, it was the quarter of the century after the accession of the House of Hanover.

Besides excluding their opponents from power, the Whigs instantly took more positive measures. The House of Commons was strongly Whig. A secret committee was at once appointed to inquire into the negotiations for the Peace. Walpole was chairman, took the lead in the proceedings, and drew the report. The topics of the report were such as at the present day would furnish a motion of censure. They are a recapitulation of the objections to be urged against the terms of the Peace. Every objection was supported by extracts from authentic documents. Walpole took five hours in r

Pretender, breaks down, and was felt to have broken down. The intrigue was undoubted, but the intriguers and their confederates had been too discreet to leave dangerous papers behind in their desks. The evidence that would have condemned them was then hidden in the despatch-boxes at St. Germain's.

Impeachment, however, was still naturally regarded as the proper process against ministers who had gravely offended a triumphant majority. It was the only way then known of securing responsibility to Parliament. A Tory House in 1701 impeached Somers, Halifax, Oxford, and Portland, for the part they had taken in the Spanish Partition Treaties of 1700. A Whig House now (1715) directed the impeachment of Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Ormond for high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanours mainly relating to the Peace of Utrecht. When Walpole himself fell, a generation later (1742), there was a loud and sanguinary cry that he should be impeached. But even by that time this way of striking a political delinquent was beginning to seem anomalous. The proceedings against Oxford and Bolingbroke are the last instance in our history of a political impeachment. They are the last ministers who were ever made personally responsible for giving bad advice and pursuing a discredited policy, and since then a political mistake has ceased to be a crime. Warren Hastings was impeached

approved; and second, the remarkable growth of the Cabinet system, of which I shall have something to say on a later page, tended slowly but decisively to substitute the joint responsibility of the whole body of ministers for the personal responsibility of an individual minister. To impeach, or to pass an Act either of attainder or of pains and penalties against, a Cabinet would be practically absurd and impossible.

Walpole's share in pressing for these strong measures against his fallen enemies is a matter of some controversy. Bolingbroke charges him with being their hottest advocate. There is no positive evidence either way. Walpole was a man of humane and moderate temper, but he was by no means a man averse to strike if he thought a blow required. Though he had no rancour by nature, he knew how to be relentless as a matter of business. He had been the leader in sifting the evidence before his secret committee. When somebody prophesied that the committee would end in smoke, Walpole vehemently cried out that he wanted words to express his sense of the villany of the late Frenchified ministry. To those in whom impeachment is almost as much of an antiquated ordeal by fire, and in whom the Treaty of Utrecht excites only historic interest and no passion, the whole proceeding may seem intemperate and impolitic. A cool and sagacious bystander may have smiled at

unsettled. The proclamation of King George had been in some places attended by riot and disorder. The Church was violent against the House of Hanover. London was so uncertain that, for long after the accession, cannon were kept at Whitehall to keep the mob in awe. The Highlanders were rising. It was in conformity to the political notions of the time, as it is to those of our own time in relation to Ireland, to strike vindictive blows of this kind. Such considerations as these may well have had their weight in the ministerial decision. The affair came to an abortive end. After Oxford had lain a year in the Tower, it was resolved to reduce the charges against him from high treason to misdemeanour; and after another year a difference arose, or was promoted by Walpole's connivance, between the Lords and the Commons as to the mode of procedure. After a prolonged exchange of explanations, the Commons resolved to drop the prosecution (1717).

The opening years of the new reign mark one of the least attractive periods in political history. George I. was silent, simple, and not ill-meaning; he was attentive to business, thrifty, and pacific. He had some ambition to play a high and stately part, if he had only known how. But he cared very little for his new kingdom, and knew very little about its people or its institutions. He brought over with him a couple of rapacious mistresses

hounds was appointed: the emolument went into a German pocket. When Walpole remonstrated with the king against these outrageous venalities, the king with a smile replied in the bad Latin in which, as neither of them knew the language of the other, he and his minister were said to converse together: "I suppose that you are also paid for your recommendations."

The manners of the outlandish invaders were as bad as their morals. One of them once carried his insolence so far that Walpole, though he was in the royal presence, summoning both the Latin and the frankness that he had learned at Eton, cried out to the offender, "*Mentiris impudentissime.*" His worst enemy was Robotham, the king's French secretary. "This man," said Walpole, "—a mean fellow, of what nation I know not—having obtained the grant of a reversion, which he designed for his son, I thought it too good for him, and therefore reserved it for my own son. On this disappointment the foreigner impertinently demanded 2500*l.*, under pretence that he had been offered that sum for the reversion, but I was wiser than to comply with his demands." Townshend was equally resolute in resisting the importunities of the two favourite ladies for English peerages, for reversions, grants, and all the rest of the perquisites which the Hanoverians regarded as their rightful spoil. The inevitable result was the growth of a bitter enmity in the

most as soon as the administration was formed.
and Walpole stood together. They came
same county, they had been at the same school,
Townshend had married Walpole's sister. Like
Townshend was a solid man, apt in business,
and firm, but unlike Walpole in being hot, im-
patient. The elevation of the two new
is said to have given umbrage to the ambition
Sunderland. His contemporaries could not agree
the third Earl of Sunderland was quite so bad
as his father, the faithless and unprincipled
of James II. He hid violent passions under an
and frigid demeanour; he sought no friends, and
to regard books as the only worthy com-
of lofty natures. He formed an important
of early and rare editions of the Greek and
sics at Althorp, destined in a later generation
the home of still nobler and more splendid
Sunderland fell short of money, and with a
none but a bibliomaniac can know, he trans-
s beloved books for a sum of ten thousand
his father-in-law, the Duke of Marlborough,
hands they became the foundation of the great
Library, dispersed not many years ago.
other effects of Sunderland's classical reading, it
him a firm republican. He even thought fit

"You little know Lord Sunderland," he replied. "If I had so much as hinted at it, his temper was so violent that he would have done his best to throw me out of the window." Something deeper, however, than temper divided the Sunderland Whigs from Walpole. Aristocratic pride in union with republican professions has often produced the narrowest type of oligarchy; and Sunderland's republicanism only meant that the wings of royal prerogative were to be clipped for the benefit of a small caste of exclusive patricians. He hated the Crown, but he had none of Walpole's respect and inclination for the Commons. It was no wonder that they soon fell out.

Walpole once remarked how difficult it is to trace the causes of a dispute between statesmen. Some transactions of our own day furnish a striking illustration of the truth of this remark, and the difficulty of explaining such disputes would be most readily admitted by those who might seem to hold the clue. Walpole's biographer maintains that it was Sunderland's discontent and Stanhope's weakness and bad faith that lay at the bottom of the Whig schism of 1717. Stanhope's descendant, the careful historian of those times, insists that the rupture was due to Townshend's unreasonableness and want of judgment. It is not possible at this distance of time, and with imperfect material, conclusively to

of the foreigners. The Cabinet was divided
on dissent on principle or policy, but by the
dangerous element of personal jealousy and
ambition. All these conditions united to
make it inevitable.

George left his new dominion for Hanover in July
1714. His passion for his native land, like his ignorance
of the land that had adopted him, was a
good fortune for constitutional government.
His inability to speak English led to that important
usage, the absence of the sovereign from
councils. His expeditions to Hanover threw
the management of all domestic affairs almost without
exception into the hands of his English ministers. If the
Hanoverian kings had been Englishmen instead
of Germans, if they had been men of talent and ambition,
if they had been men of strong and commanding will without
weakness, Walpole would never have been able to
lay the foundations of government by the House of
Commons and by Cabinet so firmly that even the ob-
stinate opposition of George III was unable to overthrow it.
For the system now established, circumstances
favoured the first two sovereigns of the Hanoverian
dynasty. They made a bargain with the English Whigs, and it
lasted until the accession of the third George.
The first two sovereigns were unable to manage the affairs of Hanover, and the

hatred between father and son, and in the rivalry among ministers. The double leaven soon began to work. The Hanoverians played upon the king's jealousy of the prince, and rapidly instilled into his mind the suspicion that Townshend and his colleagues were intriguing with Argyll and the prince's party in England. It is as certain as anything can be in matters so obscure and intricate, that for this charge there was no foundation, and that Walpole was justified in assuring Stanhope, with wholesome bluntness, that whoever sent over the accounts of any intrigues of this kind, or any management in the least tending to any view or purpose but the service, honour, and interest of the king, would be discovered to be "confounded liars from the beginning to the end."

Nor was it possible to cut off the politics of Hanover from the politics of Great Britain. The acquisition of Bremen and Verden from Sweden for the electorate of Hanover, was approved by Walpole on the ground that the two provinces commanded the only inlets from British waters into Germany. They secured the trade with Hamburg, and put a check on the molestation by Sweden of British commerce in the Baltic. When the king, however, for Hanoverian reasons sought to make war on the Czar of Russia, because he had invaded the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg, Townshend declared that

Wales, and to show that the business of
could be as well transacted by the son as by

next was found for the removal of Townshend
office, in circumstances which it is not worth
to recapitulate. They would never have
had adequate cause for so strong a step, if
had not operated, and it is impossible to
either Sunderland or Stanhope of singular
to their friends and colleagues in London.
and described the situation in a private letter
at Hanover: "The prince hates us, and
no time we are almost lost with the king,
the foreigners determined against us." Even
form in which we can imagine the great and
conception of loyalty among members of a
it is now held, would condemn the action of the
ers at Hanover in lending themselves to the
guns against absent colleagues. In the sharp
ons that were exchanged between Stanhope
le, the former takes up ground with which it
le to feel satisfied. Was he, Stanhope asks,
king that Townshend must continue to be
of State, or else that the Whigs would quit
body? "I really have not yet learnt to speak
re to my master: and I think a king is very

the services of individual leaders at his own discretion, and to assign them their respective offices as to him may seem good? Queen Anne had undoubtedly acted on this principle. Walpole thought that the time had come for ministers to settle their offices among themselves.

Townshend was prevailed upon for a very short time to remain in the administration as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, then always a Cabinet office. But the truce did not last. The king's favour had too evidently gone to Sunderland and Stanhope. On the proposal that the Commons should vote supplies for preparations against Sweden, the Townshend Whigs showed themselves cold and disaffected; Walpole spoke coldly for the vote, but lent it no active support; and it was only carried by a majority of four. In his resentment at this narrow escape of a government measure, the king dismissed Townshend from his post the same night. Walpole was too valuable at the Treasury to be so lightly parted with. Vain attempts were made to separate him from his colleague. The tender of his resignation the next morning was followed by an extraordinary scene in the royal closet. The king entreated him not to retire, and put the seals back into his hat. Walpole protested that if as Chancellor of the Exchequer he found money for the warlike designs of Stanhope and Sunderland, he

, he resisted them, then he would forfeit the
favour of his sovereign. No fewer than ten
the seals replaced upon the table. The king
gave way, and Walpole quitted the closet with
tearful eyes, leaving his master as painfully agitated

was one quarter in which the split in the
royal family and the fierce quarrel in the royal family
found their liveliest delight. Atterbury, the conspirator
who held the episcopal see of Rochester, was now,
in elaborate disguise of cypher and cant names,
the Pretender sanguine accounts of what
was going on at court. From these letters we learn
how the Jacobite hopes were raised by the removal
of the ministers who were well known to be the fastest
of the present settlement. Every piece of gossip
concerning dissensions between the Prince of Wales and
the King of Hanover, as they styled King George, was
made into a reason for the fond belief, which only
the fatal fatuity of plotters in exile could have
entertained, that the king would rather throw the
crown to the Pretender than suffer it to devolve
upon his eldest heir. Every movement of the public
spirits was their spirits up or down, as if they were
on the stock exchange. The Tories were as elated
as the Jacobites. They flattered themselves that

the same Parliament during the life of the sovereign, and Charles II did actually keep his last Parliament for seventeen years. Such excess produced reaction, and in 1694 Parliament passed an Act limiting its normal lifetime to periods of three years. In 1716 the great exigencies of the time justified a move in the other direction, and an extension of the life of a Parliament from three years to seven. The measure, which was originally designed for the special object of securing the Protestant succession at a moment of peril, had wider consequences. Speaker Onslow, the sage observer of parliamentary events, used to declare that the Septennial Bill of 1716 marked the true era of the emancipation of the House of Commons from its former dependence on the Crown and the House of Lords.¹ The Act was undoubtedly one of the most important causes of the increase of that power in the House of Commons, on which Walpole was the first minister habitually and on principle to rely. Meanwhile it enabled the Whigs in 1717 to cut themselves in two with impunity.

After leaving court in 1717, Walpole remained in opposition for three years. Many blamed ~~him~~ for deserting the king. Many declared that it was desertion of the country and of Parliament to ~~abandon~~ schemes for reducing the national debt, which, as he

¹ Coxe, i. 137.

tested in the same circumstances, that nothing
other from his mind than to embarrass government.
When men leave colleagues in a government, they
see how far their departure may lead them. The
party, and the restlessness of a powerful nature,
too strong for the practice of benevolent neutrality.
loudly disclaiming any desire to embarrass the
ministers, he still found himself invariably com-
mitted to resist all their measures. He opposed
the Corn Bill, though its provisions were merely
moderate and were necessary. He opposed the repeal of
the Stamp Act, though he had himself once denounced
it as more worthy of Julian the Apostate than of the
present Parliament of England. So apt is party
to degenerate into moral paradox.

None of these excesses or inconsistencies shook
his hold on Parliament. Nor is that hold hard to
break. To begin with, he showed upon occasion
a moderating temper which the House of Commons
secretly respects, even in its moments of passion
and heat, and which it always recognises when the
passion is evaporated. A member had greatly offended
him, by bringing against a certain set of men that
charge of obstruction which has become part of the
usual form of party scolding in later days. A few
words from Walpole were enough to save the gentleman

escaped, in his honesty had not taken the form, as honesty sometimes does, of obstinate contumacy. But the true basis of Walpole's power was something more positive than a moderating temper. He was a skilful manager of men, but he was also an unrivalled man of business. Wherever money was concerned, his knowledge, skill, clearness, and judgment gave him an authority that was paramount. In all these transactions, even his worst enemies had with mortification to admit that the House of Commons relied more upon Walpole's opinion than upon that of any other member. In weighing the ordinary accusation that his immense parliamentary influence was due to gross corruption, it is well not to forget that he laid the foundations of that influence while he was in opposition and without strong party support, and without any of the means of corruption. The truth is that the House of Commons has always been most wisely ready to give its confidence to men whom it believes to possess a firm, broad, and independent grasp of the great material interests of the country.

The time was close at hand when neglect of Walpole's practical wisdom brought upon the nation a terrible disaster. Before this catastrophe arrived, Walpole was provoked to the exertion of all his powers by a proposal of the gravest constitutional moment. Sunderland was in extreme disfavour with the House of Commons, and he was

majority: the prince's first step, therefore, on the throne would be to strengthen the Tory in the House of Lords. Queen Anne had set precedent in the creation of the twelve peers to the Peace of Utrecht. That this was a violent step Tories admitted, but they declared that, after all, it was not to be compared with the act by which the electors, chosen by the people for three years, chose a king for seven. Sunderland did not shrink from this audacious measure to counterwork the danger to the Whigs. Lord Stanhope was made to bring in a bill for a close restriction on the royal prerogative of creating peers. The number of peers, according to the bill, was never at any time to be enlarged beyond six times the number then existing. At the accession of George I. the total number of the peers, including the six peers spiritual and the sixteen representative peers from Scotland, was two hundred and seven.¹ Of the sixteen elective members from Scotland, five from that kingdom were to be made peers by writ. Where a failure of issue male occurred, it was to be filled up by new creation in England, and by the addition of other members of the peerage in Scotland. If, however, such a measure had become law, it would have transformed the House of Lords into a close college, and the peerage would have become an unchangeable

That this far-reaching measure failed to become law, is due to Walpole's penetration and rapidity, and by hardly any other action of his life did he set a deeper stamp upon our system of government. Formidable difficulties were in his way. The king might have been expected to object to a limitation of one of the most cherished of royal prerogatives. But the king hated the Prince of Wales, and was as anxious as Sunderland to clip his wings. The Scotch peers were won by the prospect of exchanging an elective for a hereditary seat. The Lords as a whole were openly or privately gratified by a measure which, in limiting their numbers, augmented their individual importance. The bill engaged the talents of the two most delightful prose writers of the day. It was defended by Addison, in what proved to be the final task of his life, and it was attacked by Steele. Why could not faction, says Johnson, find other advocates? Controvertists cannot long retain their kindness for each other, and "every reader must surely regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years passed in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition." The spirit of faction was too busy and too hot for these pensive regrets, and no effort was spared to forward the ministerial design. The king's name was freely used.

came to the throne ; that if the Whigs rejected
party would be for ever undone. Bribes and
were employed with equal profusion. All this
heart out of the opposition Whigs. They held
ing at Devonshire House, where Walpole found
kewarm, indifferent, and out of spirits. He at
k a high tone, protested against any weakness,
and all the topics that are the common property in
of all militant leaders of Opposition pressing
adherents to make a fight. Public opinion, he
s rising against the bill. The country gentle-
re waking up to the insult implied upon their
a measure which would shut the door of the
f Lords in their faces. He had himself over-
country gentleman with not more than eight
pounds a year, vow with great warmth to
country gentleman, that though he had no
of being made a peer himself, he would never
to lay his family under the ban of perpetual
n. Finally, he used the universal and irresistible
that it was a splendid opportunity of weakening
crediting the government. "Even if I am
by my party," he said, winding up his animated
rance, "I myself will singly stand forth and
it." A lively altercation followed, but such
and insupportable firmness in a political leader with

in its last decade defended a natural aristocracy.² Nevertheless it is an excellent setting for what a first-rate judge of our own day used to describe as the very best parliamentary argument he knew, excepting Mr. Gladstone's speech on the taxation of charities. Walpole's reasoning, and the energy with which it was urged, led to the rejection of the bill by a triumphant majority of two hundred and sixty-nine against one hundred and seventy-seven.

¹ This famous speech is given in outline by Coxe, chap. xviii.

² *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, p. 217 (ed. 1818).

CHAPTER IV

RISE TO POWER—BOLINGBROKE

To the great dismay of the Jacobites, the two circumstances on which they had been so fondly counting suddenly took a new turn. The Whig schism came to an end, and the king allowed himself to be reconciled to his son. Walpole played an active part in both of these transactions. As clearly as the Jacobites, he perceived that the feud between the prince and the king threatened real dangers to the peace of the realm. Things had reached such a pitch that the king actually consulted the Lord Chancellor as to the legality of a bill for compelling the Prince of Wales, on the demise of the crown, to divest himself of his German dominions. A much more sinister project was found among the king's papers at his death, nothing less than a proposal made by the head of the Admiralty to seize the Prince of Wales and carry him off to the wilds of America. This atrocious design recalls the old rumour that Buckingham had offered to oblige Charles II by kidnapping his consort, dispatching her to some colony, and then grounding a divorce on the plea of wilful desertion.

Fields with a complimentary escort of life guards.

Walpole's return to the administration was part of the same political scheme, just as his fall twenty years later was connected with the position of the heir apparent of that day. A man of his energy and passion for the work of government is apt to grow tired of opposition, and public considerations pointed in the same way as his own ruling impulse. The end of the Whig schism involved a general closing up of ranks in face of new alarms from the Pretender. The reunion of the Whigs was at least as welcome to the men in office as to the men in opposition. The hand that had just destroyed the Peerage Bill was too heavy to be left with safety outside the government. Yet though Walpole and Townshend once more joined the administration, they were forced to content themselves with subordinate posts. Townshend, who had filled what was then the leading office of Secretary of State, became Lord President of the Council; and Walpole, who had been First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, was made Paymaster of the Forces without a seat in the Cabinet (1720). His opposition was at an end, but he took no part in the active work of government, and in the summer withdrew to Norfolk to bide his time.

Before many months had passed the country was overtaken by the memorable disasters of the South Sea

The fever quickly spread to England, with a that may be worth noting, that while Law was genius and by no means without sincerity and tion of character, in London the promoters were e than ordinary stock-jobbers with extraordi- ness, audacity, and corruption. The South Sea 20 was a measure for enabling the South Sea to absorb in their stock a quantity of irre- annuities, consolidate various branches of the ot, reduce the rate of interest, and out of the their trade eventually achieve one of the most esired objects of that day by paying off the ebt. Fortunately for himself Walpole had at rly stage exposed the fallacies on which the he directors rested, though he remained an olleague of ministers who were its zealous s. Thousands of bubble projects have been since that memorable mania, and only a gen- eo speculation in railway stock was almost as at, widespread, and desperate as the great 1721. But the South Sea scheme is in our he only case of this ruinous calamity at government directly and actively connived. crash came, a cry broke out for vengeance, as as indiscriminate as outcries usually are, when bent on punishing others for their own blind-

sion, the political danger was by no means slight. The German mistresses were known to have had a share in the spoil, the Prince of Wales had been chairman of a bubble copper company from which he extracted forty thousand pounds in a metal more precious than copper; and besides these specific grounds for anger, the natural tendency to blame government was especially strong when that government was new, foreign, unsettled, and unpopular.

All eyes were turned to Walpole. Though he had privately dabbled in South Sea stock on his own account, his public predictions came back to men's minds; they remembered that he had been called the best man for figures in the House, and the disgrace of his most important colleagues only made his sagacity the more prominent. Craggs, the Secretary of State, and his father, the Postmaster-General, were both implicated in the receipt of enormous sums, as the differences on transactions in fictitious stock created to buy the passing of the South Sea Bill. The son died of smallpox, and the father quickly followed, leaving a fortune of a million and a half. Aislabe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was down for nearly eight hundred thousand pounds, fraudulently acquired. Sunderland was charged with similar transactions, but whatever substance there may have been in the charge, they had been managed discreetly enough

tion made it impossible for Sunderland to re-

Lord Stanhope, his principal colleague, was by a curiously sudden death in February 1721. In the course of an angry debate, the young Duke of Devonshire compared Stanhope to Sejanus, the wicked adviser who fomented divisions in the imperial family, in the reign of Tiberius, his master, odious to the people. Stanhope was so incensed at gibes that he could only have laughed at, that in the angry course of his reply he was seized with a fit, and the fit expired. This brought about a re-casting of ministerial parts, and at the request of the great Whigs, Walpole undertook the task. He resumed his old posts, and once more became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer (1721), while Townshend was again Secretary of

He held his offices practically without a break for one year. The younger Pitt had an almost unbroken supremacy, but with that exception is no parallel to Walpole's long tenure of office. To estimate aright the vast significance of this extraordinary stability, we must remember that the country passed through eighty years of revolution. A generation in 1721 could recall the execution of Charles I., the Protectorate of Oliver, the fall of Richard Cromwell,

Parliamentary government has been said to prevent great shocks, but to multiply small ones. From the critical state of the time Walpole was ceaselessly exposed to these small shocks, and the vigour with which he circumvented the cabals that from the first year to the last surrounded and confronted him, was only less important to the security of the great public bulwark of his power, than the success with which he surmounted grave difficulties of state. It would have been easy for Walpole in South Sea affairs to avenge old grievances on Sunderland and others. As it was he chose the magnanimous course of insisting, even at the expense of much unpopularity for himself, on the most lenient counsels that Parliament could be persuaded to allow. But the jealous and unquiet Sunderland, even in the hour of his disgrace, was again busy on devices for displacing the new rival in the royal favour. He hit upon the extraordinary expedient of suggesting to the king that he should create Walpole Postmaster-General for life. His calculation was that the large pay would tempt a man of narrow fortune; that if Walpole accepted, he would be incapable of sitting in Parliament; while, if he refused, he would offend the king. The king, however, balked the childish plan by asking whether Walpole desired the proposal or knew of it. Sunderland confessed that he did not. "Then," said the king, "do not make him the

serve me."

ing may well have felt the perilous situation
h Walpole's capacity had rescued him. The
of the plot for which Atterbury was exiled
vealed how high Jacobite hopes had risen
recent confusion. In the excitement some
were taken with Walpole's approval, which it is
stify. The bill of pains and penalties against
himself was a dangerous invasion of the
d sanctity of legal guarantees, and it is satis-
think that it is the last instance of its kind.
appeared as a witness in the course of the
; the bishop used all his skill to perplex his
but, says Speaker Onslow, he was too hard
hop at every turn, "although a greater trial
s way scarce ever happened between two such
." ¹ Still more alien, not only to the temper
but even to the better mind of that age, as
asures prove, was the imposition of a tax of
on Roman Catholics as a composition for
and it was presently extended even to non-
The whole nation almost, men, women, and
pable of taking an oath, flocked to the places
quarter sessions were holden. . . . It was a
well as a ridiculous sight to see people crowd-
a testimony of their allegiance to a govern-

the century, least of all in the manner of the century, exhibited less of the spirit of oppression and intolerance.

Sunderland died in 1722, and left as his representative in the public counsels a statesman whose name has long ago faded away from general recollection, and who made no great mark on national policy, but yet was by the common consent of contemporaries unsurpassed by any man of his age in brilliance of gifts, compass of view, and aspiring vigour of character. Carteret was by far the ablest and most striking representative of the principles, policy, and temper in handling public business, that were most directly antagonistic to the principles, policy, and temper of Walpole. "He was a fine person," says Shelburne, who married his daughter, "of commanding beauty, the best Greek scholar of the age, overflowing with wit, not so much a *diseur de bons mots*, as a man of true, comprehensive ready wit, which at once saw to the bottom, and whose imagination never failed him, and was joined to great natural elegance. He had a species of oratory more calculated for the senate than the people."¹ It was Carteret who said to Henry Fox, "I want to instil a noble ambition into you; to make you knock the heads of the kings of Europe together, and jumble something out of it that may be of service to this country." "What is it to me," he once said, "who is a

¹ *Shelburne's Life*, i. 88. Mr. Disraeli, who had brooded much over Bolingbroke's period and his ideas, has some interesting remarks

who is a bishop? It is my business to make
d emperors, and to maintain the balance of

He was all for glory, says Onslow, and thought
re of raising a great name to himself all over
and having that continued by historians to all
than of any present domestic popularity or
whatever. A story is told of Carteret which
er of scholarship as a fine adornment of great-
character or action, will always delight to re-

As he lay dying (1762) the Under-Secretary
im, as Lord President, the preliminary articles
Treaty of Paris. He found the minister so
that he proposed to put off the business until
day. Carteret replied by repeating the beauti-
where Sarpedon says to Glaucus that if keeping
n the fray would keep back age and death from
on indeed neither would he himself fight amid
most, nor send the other into the battle; "but
nce ten thousand shapes of death hover over
them no mortal may escape—now, forward
o." ¹ The particular emphasis with which,
g to the narrator, he spoke forth the third line
ὅτι αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοις μαχόμενν—was true
g passion which made him the most dangerous
ers, though no inglorious man.

ret was made Secretary of State by the influence

has been commonly cited as an instance of jealous determination to exclude every superior from power—a charge on which it is sufficient to remark that Carteret was quite as busy in striving to exclude Walpole and Townshend, as they were in excluding him; that Townshend had a much more active part to play, and took a more active part than Walpole; that this was an ordinary case of struggle in a Cabinet, in which, luckily for the country, Carteret happened to be the worst fortune of war against him; and, finally, that it would have stultified himself and ruined his whole administration if he had allowed a minister to remain in charge of so momentous a branch of business as foreign affairs, in whom it could be truly said, as Onslow said of Carteret, that “he thought consulting the interior interests, the disposition of the people, the conduct of business in Parliaments, and the methods of raising money, the execution even of his own designs, was a waste of his applications, and to be left as underparts of business to the care of inferior and subordinate underlings, in subserviency, however, to his will and measures.” We need not impute to Walpole an insatiable ambition or power, in order to understand his willingness to part company with a colleague of such temper as this. It is observed, further, that Walpole did not hurry to part company with him, for Carteret remained a member

which had its origin in Wood's halfpence, but had its roots much deeper than the mere issue sent to an English tradesman to supply a deficiency in Irish coinage. That the issue of the patent was a odious job, by which a large sum of money was put into the pocket of the king's mistress, is plain. The amount to be struck was in gross and a great excess over what was required, as was shown by the unwillingness of the government to reduce the sum from more than one hundred thousand pounds to forty thousand. The whole operation was conducted from the east with a flagrant disregard for Irish opinion and authority, which might be called incredible, if the principle had not prevailed until now. On the other hand, the unfortunate coins were good and of value, nor was anybody obliged to take them who did not choose; and the case against them was marked by exaggerations, misrepresentations, and lies. It was a deadly blow for the peace of the British government, and was taken up by the strongest controversialists of the age. Swift hated and despised the country in which his unhappy lot was cast, but he had the honest feeling natural to a powerful mind for the wretched condition in which it was governed, and he was inspired by a keen animosity against the party in England and Ireland, by whose neglect or ill-will he had been

This was one of the too few occasions in Irish history on which the whole nation in both its branches, and of both creeds, spoke with one voice and faced their bad rulers with a united front. It was no feeling of justice, and no interest in good government in Ireland, that prompted the final surrender, but the fear, inspired in the agents of Ascendancy, that the exasperation against Wood and his coins was bringing Catholics and Protestants, Jacobites and Whigs, into an intimacy that was dangerous to the constitutional connection between Great Britain and the sister-kingdom. Walpole at once saw the impossibility of forcing the inclinations of a whole people, governed and governors alike. Carteret on the spot—though his own intrigues in Ireland at an earlier stage of the affair will hardly bear examination—now earnestly supported the same view, and, in spite of Townshend and others of their colleagues, the viceroy was authorised to announce to the Irish Parliament that the obnoxious patent was absolutely at an end. Ireland gave Walpole no further trouble. Affairs were mainly guided by the influence of Archbishop Boulter in the English and planter interest; and Walpole appears, when he thought of Ireland at all, to have regarded this as the safest policy.

With the temporary suppression of the Jacobite plots, the subjection of Carteret, the pacification of the ferment

in this respect will be most conveniently
in a chapter of its own. The king wished to
his minister by a peerage. Walpole was the
minister who made the House of Commons the
authority, and he declined to leave it. The peer-
conferred upon his oldest son. Among minor
steps for strengthening his influence was one at
which philosophers may smile, and which the party
may in his heart despise, but which for practical
reasons he is not likely to overlook. In 1725 Walpole
persuaded the king to revive the order of the Bath. No
one had been made since 1661. The minister be-
came of himself of it as a cheap way of rewarding a
man for buying off a possible foe. The bestowal of
the riband, moreover, would be convenient for
buying off what is in every generation the importunate
party for the blue. "They who take the Bath," he
said, "old Duchess of Marlborough, "shall the sooner
be in the Garter." He set the example by taking the
order himself, and became Sir Robert. The following
year (1726) he resigned this honour, and became a
member of the higher order.

The fulsome author of the *Night Thoughts* had the
year received from Walpole a royal pension of
one hundred pounds per annum, and he now celebrated
his patron's career in some foolish jingle
in which he called him our best of former

commoner. NO commoners had been made knights of the Garter since Sir Edward Montagu and General Monk in 1660. No commoner after Walpole received the blue riband until Lord North in 1772, and the only other knights of the order who have sat in the House of Commons since were Castlereagh and Palmerston. Queen Victoria desired to give the garter to Sir Robert Peel in 1845, but Peel, with a characteristic mixture of shyness and of pride, replied that he sprang from the people and belonged to the people, and that the honour would be inappropriate. We may perhaps wonder that Walpole did not act on the reason afterwards assigned by Lord Melbourne for refusing the garter; that he did not see why he should be such a fool as to buy himself, when he could buy somebody else with it. He was possibly guided as usual by motives of policy. "Is ambition imputed to me?" he asked in his great defence in 1741. "Why, then, do I still continue a commoner—I who refused a white staff and a peerage? I had, indeed, like to have forgotten the little ornament about my shoulders, which gentlemen have so repeatedly mentioned in terms of sarcastic obloquy. But surely though this may be regarded with envy or indignation in another place, it cannot be supposed to raise any resentment in this House, where many may be pleased to see those honours which their ancestors have worn returned again

years to come found their patrons never tired
ning to choruses of which the point was always
me ; that though the knight had laid down the
and to take up the blue, a third change awaited
et, when justice would at last be done by the
n string at Tyburn.

urn was still a long way off, but the elements of
osition gradually gathered themselves together.
ory reaction of Anne was recent, and the state of
hat had made it possible was only quiescent and
tinct. It was Walpole's cue to represent Tory
acobite as identical, so as to cover the whole
ion with the taint of disaffection to the revolu-
ttlement and the reigning family. This was no
manœuvre for party purposes. As Hume shows,
r and roundhead, court party and country party,
nd Whig, all represented genuine divisions of prin-
a our government ; neither of them disowned either
hy or liberty, but men of easy temper, attached
ce and order, would lean towards monarchy, while
spirits, passionately devoted to liberty, would
he republican part of our mixed scheme. Abstract
les, however, never bring us to sufficiently close
s in politics. Principles, as Hume excellently
re changed into affections. Men are guided by
hey take to be the balance between advantages

by Lord-Chancellor Cowper in that remarkable memorial which he laid before George I. on his accession.² "Many of the Tories," he says, "would rejoice to see the Pretender restored by a French power, much more if by any safer means ; the best of them would hazard nothing to keep him out, though probably do nothing hazardous to bring him in ; but if ever he should declare himself Protestant, with proper circumstances to make his conversion probable (as, after the death of the French king and his mother, it is not unlikely he may do), they would greedily swallow the cheat, and endeavour by all possible means to put in practice again their old notions of divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right, by a restoration of the person in whom by their opinion that right is lodged." This remained a true description of the equivocal and unstable position of the Tories, for the greater part of Walpole's government. The least Jacobite among them were still very cold friends to the new settlement, and for many years any accident might have turned them into active enemies. These were the group who followed Sir William Wyndham—one of the most respect-

¹ *Hume's Essays*, i. 133, and 470 (Green's Edition).

² This memorial is printed as an appendix to chapter xvii. of Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, but for some reason has been omitted from later editions.

se ; a statesman endowed with firmness, dignity, and the gift, so hard to define but so sensible a quality, of imposing his authority upon his hearers. Tories, so early as 1728, were joined by a small number of discontented Whigs, headed by William Pulteney who presently became the leader of the coalition against Walpole in the Commons, as Carteret was in the House of Lords. Pulteney left the main body of the Tories in disgust at not receiving either the office or the place to which he justly considered that his talents entitled him. According to one story, Walpole soon perceived that he had made a mistake, and immediately endeavored to repair it by proposing to make him Secretary of State, but Pulteney's self-love had been too sorely wounded. Another version is, that during the quarrel between Townshend and Carteret in 1724, Walpole discovered that Pulteney was intriguing with Carteret and resolved that as he had chosen to try to gain office by that door, the key of the other should be turned upon him. Whatever the cause, he went forth to meet long opposition. He was a fine speaker, abundant in sharp epigram and cutting wit, prompt in debate, cool in repudiation and fire, and a master in all the arts of parliamentary attack. But even friendly contemporaries thought that his shining gifts were ruined by uncertainty and instability of mind. "It would be endless," says Ches-

His career was pure illusion, and when the hour of triumph arrived, we shall see that he in an instant turned it into the most extraordinary failure in party history.

The secret mover of the machinery of opposition was a wilder and more versatile spirit than any of these, the famous Bolingbroke. We cannot wonder that his own generation should have been dazzled by the genius of a man who had taken the main part in overturning a ministry so covered with glory as that of Marlborough and Godolphin; who showed such unexampled dexterity, alike in framing, carrying, and defending the great instruments of Utrecht; who led men of such force, brilliancy, and position as Carteret, Pulteney, and Wyndham; and who finally, as he had contributed more than any one else to the fall of Marlborough, now boldly applied himself to sap the power of the minister who was as strong and as successful in civil government as Marlborough had ever been in the field.¹ The misanthropy of Swift, the mockery of Voltaire, the sensitiveness of Pope, were all overcome by the fascination of his address, the glitter of his ideas, and the eloquence of his talk. Swift wrote to Stella that Mr. St. John was the greatest young man he ever knew—wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of appre-

¹ See Walpole's *George II*, i. 222.

of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and of Horace. In every part he was a consummate master—the stoical philosopher musing on the joys of retirement and study, the statesman busily engaged in policies, erecting combinations, and moulding princes into patriot kings, or the simple country gentleman smoking tobacco with his honest neighbours, inquiring how the wheat was doing in the four-acre field, and proud to know the names of all his hounds. Paradoxical as this extraordinary man have been sought all through history, from Alcibiades down to Lord Byron; he united the best poet of his day with philosophy; he made speeches that intoxicated the House of Commons, and created such a tradition that illustrious authorities deemed that they would rather recover one of Bolingbroke's fragments than the lost books of Livy, or "all the Greek and Roman lore;" he developed ideas on government and the constitution which have lived to find their echo among eminent men even in our own time; and finally, he handled the great and difficult instrument of written language with such freedom and copiousness, with such vivacity and ease, that in spite of much affectation and falsetto he ranks, in all that concerns style and execution, only below the three or four masters of English prose. Yet of all the char-

¹ 1st November 1711.

being attainted for high treason at Westminster, he was at the same time impeached for treason by his new master at St. Germain's. After this unique experience he refreshed himself by a draught of what he called *consolatio philosophica*, and composed Reflections upon Exile, an edifying collection of platitudes freely borrowed from Seneca. His sense of the beauties of exile did not prevent him from abject efforts to bring it to an end. No bankrupt politician ever surpassed his dissimulation. He hastened to pay court to Walpole's brother in Paris, entered into correspondence with the English ministers to the detriment of his old Jacobite friends, at the same time intrigued against the English ministers with the French Government, and finally, after finding out Carterot's intrigues with the Tories, carried their secrets over to the Whigs. A much more effective step was to bribe the Duchess of Kendal with a present of eleven thousand pounds, as the price of his restoration. Walpole was given to understand that if he did not comply he would be dismissed, and as a compromise he passed a bill for the restitution of the family estates, but maintaining the exclusion from Parliament. In his own day, Walpole was always blamed by his friends for mistaken lenity in consenting to Bolingbroke's return. According to the temper of modern times, we are more disposed to think him weak for not making the amnesty complete.

in schemes, his passion for display, were sure to
make him the minister's enemy, and his enmity could
have been more injurious in the comparative privacy
of the House of Lords, than it proved to be in the pages
of a *craftsman*. As it was, his vigour, hardihood, and
eloquence made him for ten years the intellectual inspirer
of opposition both in the press and in Parliament.
He had been a Tory highflier, he had been a whimsical,
capricious James's Secretary of State; he now became a
leader of the Whigs, denounced legitimacy and legitimists,
and was content modestly to savour the graces of con-
stitution. He insisted on figuring as the only orthodox
advocate of Revolution principles, and with righteous
indignation branded Walpole for endangering the untold
benefits of the Revolution settlement. Ingenuity was
carried farther than in Bolingbroke's efforts to
use phrases that should catch the followers of Wynd-
ham, without startling the friends of Pulteney, and
to persuade both that they were engaged in "a
defence of the constitution." Bolingbroke was
without the damonic elements of character: he had
energy, penetration, insight, elasticity, fertility,
imagination, adventure. But neither his character nor
the easy and incongruous creations of his political
theory were calculated to attract the country gentlemen.
They only relished his attacks on the minister. They

was no answer possible to Walpole's scathing description of him, in one of his most apt and energetic passages, ferreting out information for the benefit of foreign ambassadors, as making it his trade to betray the secrets of every court as soon as he left it, as betraying his master he ever served, as void of all faith and honour.¹ In the face of perfidies like these, it is hardly worth while to dwell on mere inconsistencies in policy. To note that he who had made peace with France the keystone of his system, now assailed Walpole for being German; that the minister of Queen Anne, who originated the newspaper stamp, was the loudest champion of the absolute freedom of the press; or that the proposer of the first commercial treaty proved the fiercest opponent of Walpole's move towards free trade, might have been expected, he resorted to a common device of embarrassed politicians; he called for a national party. The hypocritical phrase did not make him forget that it was he who had first insisted on drawing strict party lines and driving the Whigs out of government, any more than it prevented the revival, when it was once more within reach, of the acutest jealousy between the two wings of the patriot coalition. "I was young," Burke says, "a general fashion told me it was to admire some of the writings against Sir I

¹ Coxe, ch. 42, iii. 148.

them." Chatham confessed to the same course, although Bolingbroke had been his friend and coadjutor. The verdict has been confirmed by judgment of posterity. In vain the consummate craves to disguise the shipwrecked adventurer. Does he borrow the graces and polish of Plato or to turn pamphleteering into philosophy. The rhythm, the impetuosity, the affected union of a gravity with the gay breeding of a man of the may please the idle ear, but neither in fact nor in his own conviction, have his writings on or bottom.¹ It seems to be very doubtful, even in his own day, either Bolingbroke's writings or his machinations ever did Walpole real damage. It must not be forgotten that after he had been ten years incessantly at work Bolingbroke went back to France (1735), according to some, because Walpole had driven him out in treasonable intrigues with a foreign prince; according to others, because Pulteney plainly told him that "his name and presence in England was a stain on the nation." Whatever the reason of his retreat, he returned in the mood of a baulked gambler, bitterly disappointed with his confederates, and professing much surprise at the painful discovery that what he had been aiming at all the time was not the reform of the government, but the succession to Walpole; not a

apprehended serious danger from Bolingbroke. The same influences that had forced the minister to assent to his return, were actively at work to procure his admission to power. The matter is very obscure, and perhaps is now hardly worth unravelling, even if it were possible. The authority of the mistress over the king, and the weight of Bolingbroke's bribes with the mistress, were certainly thought by Walpole to constitute a standing peril, and the fluctuations of Hanoverian policy and interest undoubtedly opened a field admirably suited to Bolingbroke's genius for intrigue. He took the bold step of insisting that the king should give his enemy an audience and hear all that he had to say. As might have been expected, mercurial plausibilities were little calculated to move the saturnine mind of the king. "*Bagatelles, bagatelles,*" he answered, when Walpole asked him what Bolingbroke had said. Bolingbroke resembled De Retz in genius for intrigue, though far inferior to him in intrepidity and courage, and so now, just as De Retz, when he found himself repulsed at court, directed all his passion and his hate against Mazarin, Bolingbroke made the destruction of Walpole the object of his life, to be effected by calumny, by wit, by invective and ridicule, by every appeal to the selfishness of bad men and the unguarded prepossessions of the good.

CHAPTER V

THE COURT

It now occurred which was by many confidently
d to bring Walpole's career as minister to an
n the summer of 1727 George I. died on the
Hanover. The news found Walpole in his
Mall at Chelsea. He instantly rode off to Rich-
s fast as he could, to announce to the new king
d happened. The prince always retired to rest
mid-day dinner, and there Walpole found him.
no time he disbelieved the news, and refused to
of bed to be told that he was king, as stubbornly
ardine in the play refuses Abhorson's summons
and be hanged. When he was at length con-
that his father was dead, he dismissed the
with a curt command to seek Sir Spencer
n at Chiswick, and from him to take his direc-
This was what Walpole had expected. His
to the interests of his former master had appar-
sured the enmity of his successor. As the son
s father, he could not well love his father's most
adviser.

“No, sir, you have a right to speak, but the House have a right to judge whether they will hear you.” Besides being Speaker, he had been the prince’s treasurer ever since his arrival in England. His selection to be the new minister would therefore have been natural; but the old men were not displaced at once, and before many days were over the king made up his mind not to displace them at all. At the time of the accommodation between the old king and his son, seven years before, Walpole seems to have had as much influence with the Princess of Wales as he ever acquired over her as queen,¹ and the new circumstances may well have revived old impressions.

At first, things at the new court underwent the change of face in which satirists of every age and tongue rejoice. Leicester House, in the old king’s lifetime, had been shunned like a city stricken with the plague; all at once it became thronged from morning to night. Walpole, whose steps had so long been dogged by a mob of toadies and placemen, now made vacancy wherever he turned. Compton held levées, crowded by men who had sworn in prose and verse that no adverse fate should ever separate them from Sir Robert. The new king’s feelings towards the three principal men in his father’s government had never been concealed. Walpole he was accustomed freely to de-

et the experience of a few days was enough to
o king that the rascal, the impertinent, and the
d were the three best servants that he was
o find. Compton's incompetency was manifest
our and twenty hours. He had, moreover, com-
he indiscretion of making the new king's wife
ny by paying court to the mistress, and he
first to find that the enmity of the new
was invariably fatal to its object. But still
important causes worked for the retention of the
stry.

most formidable danger to be apprehended, alike
lish and for Hanoverian interests, was any
in the friendly attitude of France. Happily
Fleury saw no reason why the substitution of
II for George I. should affect the interests or
f France. He explained his views to Horace
, the British ambassador: France would hold
all her engagements as one of the allies of
, if the new king would adhere to the system
ether, and to the old principle that the common
of the two countries lay in steadfast union.
moreover, sensibly assuring the ambassador that
ould be done in a couple of days of conversa-
a by volumes of despatches, urged him to repair
to London and lay his views before the king.
Valade arrived the king began by scolding him

it would be to steer the same course if the same ministers remained at the helm.

The delicate operation of fixing the amount of the civil list turned equally in Walpole's favour. The Whigs out of place, regarding office as the object of a party auction, strove to outbid the Whigs in place. Now this was a sort of play at which Walpole was not easy to beat. Compton proposed that the queen's jointure should be settled at 60,000*l.*; Walpole offered to ask Parliament for 100,000*l.* The grant to the late king had been 700,000*l.* a year. Walpole gave it to be understood that he would put it at 800,000*l.*, and at this sum it was finally settled. The king, in the conversation with Walpole in which these terms were discussed, took him by the hand and said, "Consider, Sir Robert, what makes me easy in this matter will prove for your ease too; it is for my life it is to be fixed, and it is for your life."

Before the courtiers could guess what was going on, Compton had, with tears in his eyes, declared his incapacity for so arduous a trust, and Walpole and Townshend were once more reinstalled. As Walpole drove through St. James's Square, he saw Sir Spencer Compton's house besieged by people of all ranks eager to worship the rising sun. "Did you observe," he said to a friend, "how my house is deserted, and how that

ut, "I think I see a friend," and beckoned her
, everybody eagerly made way; "and as I came
said Lady Walpole, "I might have walked over
eads if I pleased." It is not surprising that
e failed to take exalted views of human nature;
he had good sense and breadth of mind enough
clear of a cheap and shallow misanthropy.

remarkable woman who now made her first ap-
e on the stage of great affairs was to play an
nt part in Walpole's career. Caroline of Anspach
a branch of the house of Brandenburg. Having
r father early, the young princess was partially
up in Berlin. There, in the society of Sophia
te—the friend of Leibnitz and so inquisitively
that, as Leibnitz said of her, she would know
e why of a why--she acquired that keenness of
r speculative subjects, and that respect for learn-
learned men, which distinguished her from the
the gross and unlettered representatives of the
rian stock in England. She possessed by nature
e cheerful, brisk, curious, acute, and stirring char-
s both the queen, Sophia Charlotte, and her
the old Electress Sophia. She sometimes re-
o, Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, the niece of
tress Sophia and cousin therefore of George II,
married the brother of Louis XIV. became the

George II was always called by his cousin, Frederick William, the terrible father of Frederick the Great, "My brother the comedian." He had the strut, the gesticulation, the bustle of the bad play-actor, and, like the bad actor, he was all the more eager for applause, because he inwardly suspected that he only half deserved it. He was not without sterling qualities. He had physical courage: in Marlborough's wars he had served with credit; and even his father, who hated him, admitted that he fought like a man. He knew how to keep a secret, and he was proud of being a man of honour and a man of his word. This did not prevent him from snatching his father's will from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury at his first Council, walking out of the room with the will in his pocket, and taking care that it should never be heard of again. He treated the will of his uncle, the Duke of York, with equally little ceremony. The shade of George I. could not have complained, for he had burnt both his wife's will and her father's. Yet George II was rather above than below the standard of veracity current in his time. When Hervey observed to Walpole that the king would not lie, "*Not often,*" Walpole replied. He was sober and temperate in most of his appetites, though not in all; and his habits were methodical to a point of mechanical

blackgammon at night, his levées and audiences in morning, were all fixed to the instant, so that as the courtiers complained, with an almanack for the week, and a watch for the hour of the day, nobody would know precisely what point in the mill-rack the court was passing. It was his habit to call on his favourite, Mrs. Howard, every evening in her own apartments at nine o'clock, with such mechanical punctuality that he often walked about his chamber for ten minutes with his watch in his hand, waiting for the blissful moment. A mistake by a valet would throw him into much agitation, that people who came into the room perceived that he must have just received some dreadful piece of news. In ordinary intercourse he was stiff, reserved, and uneasy, as men are apt to be who privately doubt their own fitness for a post, but hope that their faults will not be found out. He had a laudable impatience against people who did not come quickly to the point; one of the many reasons why he hated the admission of Pitt to office, was that the great commoner refused him to grand speeches in the closet; they might, perhaps, be uncommonly fine, but were quite beyond his comprehension. The king's confidence was hard to gain, and was reserved in showing it, but he was never deceived: he steadily respected the judgment of the king, as he was firm as a rock for Walpole: and when the

never gives up his will or his opinion, but he never acts in anything material but when I have a mind that he should. Our master, like most people's masters, wishes himself absolute, and fancies he has courage enough to attempt making himself so; but if I know anything of him, he is, with all his personal bravery, as great a political coward as ever wore a crown."

This was the man whom it was the great business of the queen's life to humour, to cajole, to amuse, to restrain, and to lead. She acquired complete ascendancy over him, but it was purchased at a merciless price, and it needed to be carefully hidden. In spite of his self-satisfaction the king was too sharp not to know that every design, project, and combination which he found in his mind, had been laboriously planted there by concert between Walpole and the queen. But he flattered himself that nobody else knew it. To make the comedy perfect, he was never weary of gibing at sovereigns who had been governed by women and by favourites. Charles I. was ruled by his wife, Charles II by his mistresses, James II by his priests, King William by his Dutchmen, Queen Anne by Lady Marlborough and Lady Masham. He wound up his list with a smile of triumph by asking, "And who do they say governs now?"

unfathomable, a strong attachment to her person. When he was absent in Hanover, he wrote letters to her, often thirty pages long, as warm and tender as if "a young sailor of twenty to his first mistress." This did not prevent him from being rough and uncivil, when he meant to be kind. One half of his conversation with her was made up of what its unfortunate called snappings and snubbings; and he was in all circumstances intolerably exacting. He hated the majority of men as much as he delighted in that of the queen; and as he could not bear to be alone, the queen was obliged, for many hours in every day, to watch him sitting and fuming about her apartment, to listen to his cold and irascible tirades with affected interest, to answer his insults with obsequious flattery, and to practise all the other slavish artifices by which unlucky women are so often compelled to manage their tyrants. When his majesty comes into the gallery, snubs the queen, and happened to be drinking chocolate, for always stuffing the poor princess for not hearing him, and another for not growing fat; one of his sons for standing awkwardly; the Duke of Devonshire for not knowing what relation the Prince of Orange was to the Elector Palatine; and then he sends off the queen to receive more snubs in the gallery. The queen ventures to make some remark to the king about Bishop Hoadley's book on the sacraments.

friend. "It is a very pretty thing for such scoundrels, when they are raised by favour so much above their desert, to be talking and writing their stuff, to give trouble to the government that has showed them that favour; and very modest in a canting hypocritical knave to be crying, 'The kingdom of Christ is not of this world,' at the same time that he as Christ's ambassador receives six thousand a year." So the torrent of petulance every day ran on for hour after hour, the queen all the time, by smiles and nods at the right places, endeavouring to signify her approval of his wisdom, to keep herself as safely out of mischief as she could, and to prevent onlookers from discerning the depth of her humiliation and chagrin. For an hour or two before bedtime he would talk about armies or about genealogies, whilst the queen knitted and yawned. "She was at least seven or eight hours *tête-à-tête* with the king every day, during which time she was generally saying what she did not think, assenting to what she did not believe, and praising what she did not approve. She used to give him her opinion as jugglers do a card, by changing it imperceptibly, and making him believe he held the same as that he first pitched upon. But that which made these *tête-à-têtes* seem heaviest was that he neither liked reading nor being read to (unless it was to sleep); she was forced like a spider to spin out of her

judge how deadly the weariness became from the
at when Lady Suffolk was falling out of favour,
cess Royal actually said that she wished with all
rt that her father would take somebody else,
amma might be a little relieved from the *ennui*
g him for ever in her room."

private complaisance was thought by the queen
d to be borne, so long as it helped her to retain
e access to the king's ear in public affairs. No
ion was too abject, if she could only restrain
ble impulses, and guide him along the path that
icated by her good Sir Robert. Walpole often
r that she was the sole mover of the court, and
he could boast of any success in carrying on the
ffairs, it was all due to her mediation. "For if,"
"I have had the merit of giving any good advice
ing, all the merit of making him take it, madam,
ly your own, and so much so, that I not only
d do anything without you, but I know I never

When courtiers heard the queen using meta-
out not hanging every hound that ran a little
han the rest, provided in the main it kept up with
; they knew very well, and even the king must
essed, that the imagery came from Norfolk and
a Hanover.

gh the king and queen were from their position

in which the king was held upon ministers and Parliament. In her heart it was odious to her that the king should be the pensioner of his people, forced to go to the House of Commons for every shilling that he needed. Though she was ready to dispense with ceremony when it stood in the way of her convenience, as when she conversed with Lord Hervey for two hours through the half open door of her bedroom, she always held high notions of regal etiquette. She sometimes honoured Sir Robert by dining at his house in Chelsea. The queen, we are told, sat down to table with Lady Walpole and any member of the royal family whom she had brought with her. Sir Robert stood behind her chair, handed her the first dish, and then retired into another room, where he dined with the queen's household attendants. On the other hand, Walpole and the queen were on terms of familiarity in their discourse which would now be not only amazing between any royal consort and a minister, but between any decent man and any decent woman. It is painful, even at this distance of time, when they have all shrunk into thin ghosts and shadows of names, to read some of the jests with which Walpole regaled the queen, at her own expense and to her profound secret discomfiture as a woman.

Much as the queen had to endure in her masculine

and his maxims, and she perceived as clearly as
himself how closely the stability of the dynasty
and up with the firm maintenance of a parlia-
mentary constitution. No two personages were ever
better fitted to understand one another than
she and Queen Caroline. The queen, however,
disregarded the higher intellectual interests, which to Walpole
seemed as pure nonsense as they seemed to
George. She often tried to make him read Butler's
sermons, but he told her that his religion was fixed, and
had no desire either to change or improve it.
"This period in the history of our Church," says a
modern authority, "has the ecclesiastical patronage of the
queen better directed than while it was secretly
controlled by Queen Caroline; for a brief period
of study and cultivation of mind were passports to
advancement in the Church."¹ She offered a bishopric to
Hoadley, and her recommendation led to the preferment
of Hoadley to Durham. Hoadley was too political and too
in his politics to be a favourite with crowned
heads, but Hare and Sherlock were among her best friends.
In theological views undoubtedly leaned to the
liberal, the tolerant, and the heterodox, and
presumably as empty of spiritual force as the rest
of the rationalism of the time. In her girlhood a
proposal had been projected with the archduke who
was to become the Emperor Alexander II., and she

of Omnipotence itself, whether the First Person of the Holy Trinity can annihilate the Second and the Third. Clarke once went with Sir Isaac Newton, to help the great philosopher to explain to her his immortal system. The queen wished to make Clarke a bishop, and employed Walpole to overcome the good man's scruples. The incongruous pair fought the question until the candles were burnt down to the socket; but Walpole found that a metaphysician is not so easily persuaded for his own good as a member of Parliament. According to another story, the queen thought of making Clarke Archbishop of Canterbury, until she was told that he was indeed the most learned and most honest man in the king's dominions, and only in one respect unfit for the see, namely, that he was not a Christian. What is at least as interesting as the queen's correspondence with Leibnitz, or her discrimination in the selection of superior divines,—she was the steady patron of Handel. Even the tranquil atmosphere of art was invaded by the passions of political party, and the court was for Handel because the Prince of Wales was for Bononcini. Handel's noblest work was not produced until after Queen Caroline's death, but she deserves credit for her early recognition of the one resplendent genius who soars above the prosaic level of that uninspired and uninspiring time.

character and conduct of the king and queen. The immediate source of a minister's strength is the House of Commons. In the first half of the eighteenth century the immediate source of strength was the favour of the court. The king was at the head of the Whig clans—the Pelhams, the Cavendishes, the Townshends; but among their representatives he was obliged to exercise a limited choice for the first place. He had to choose whether the head of the administration should be Lord Sunderland, or Townshend, or Walpole, or Lord Pelham. To this extent the government was a personal government of the king; and the intrigues that preceded the installation of a minister that were always ready to spring up during his minority, and that broke out into dire activity after his fall, were the natural results of his position as limited arbiter in the personal government of the oligarchy.

Walpole enjoyed the favour of the court because of his prudent and skilful management of the House of Commons to obtain supplies, and it was one of his maxims both to keep on good terms with the House and to exalt its place in the constitution. It is a great mistake to suppose that Walpole was a popular minister. Dr. Johnson once drew a clear and sound distinction between Walpole's position and that of a popular minister. He said that Walpole

in the same way was trusted by the monarch in the
of his day. But the trust placed in him by the monarch
interests, and his gradual reconciliation with the
interest, would have been of no avail without the
favour of the court.

As it is a mistake to suppose that Walpole ever
on the flood tide of popularity in its modern sense,
it a mistake to regard his ascendancy as having
undisputed from the fall of Sunderland. He had
shared power with his principal colleague, and it
not until some time after the accession of George I.
his supremacy became absolute. Walpole's favour
the queen hastened the rupture between the minister
and Lord Townshend. For thirty years they had
intimate friends, and for twenty years out of the
they had been close political confederates. They
both strict and constant Whigs. They both
the censure of the Tory Parliament of Queen Anne.
They acted together in the first administration of
George I., and they left it together at the schism
the Sunderland Whigs in 1717. They both re-joined
their old colleagues in 1720, and both resumed their
posts in 1721; they expected a common disgrace on the
accession of George II., and had instead been maintained
in their offices as the two pillars of a common policy.
At this time Townshend had held the more promi-

Walpole was a commoner, had only moderate and was for long no higher in station than a other Norfolk gentlemen. All this had changed. had slowly risen by sheer weight of character ity to be by far the foremost man in the House mons. By means of which I shall have some- o say later, he had acquired money or credit to build himself one of the greatest mansions, in Norfolk, but in all England. He had made st son a peer, secured a provision for every of his family, and decorated himself with a hat was coveted by kings and princes. The ip of Queen Caroline now gave him the same ence in the counsels of the king, as Townshend the previous reign enjoyed by his favour with hness of Kendal. This inversion of parts was an Townshend could bear. His conduct after shows him to have been a really honourable and dled man, in times when honour and magna- vere rare among public personages. But he was impetuous, self-confident, very impatient of a or contradiction, not persuasive nor lucid in ng himself, and therefore often heated and te, as those who are not lucid are apt to be. d not endure banter, and Walpole sometimes d him even in the royal presence. Finally it

Apart from these grounds of personal grudge, the two ministers began to differ in serious things. Walpole had hitherto contented himself with a general hand in foreign politics. When Townshend made the Treaty of Hanover, Walpole disapproved of a measure for which he would have to find money, and which he would have against his better judgment to defend in a House of Commons where it was extremely unpopular. He openly expressed these views, and gave it to be understood that the man who had to devise the means, and to persuade the House to pass the measure, must have a dominant voice in the policy. With characteristic wisdom he distrusted elaborate schemes of foreign policy, and hated all complicated engagements; Townshend, on the contrary, delighted in them, and the more complicated and entangling they were, the more consummate he thought them.

"As long as the firm was Townshend and Walpole," said Sir Robert in a well-known sentence, "the utmost harmony prevailed; but it no sooner became Walpole and Townshend than things went wrong." Friendship declined into coolness, and coolness grew to open estrangement. One evening at Windsor the queen asked the pair where they had dined. Walpole said that Townshend had dined with a certain elderly lady

great men seized one another by the collar in a drawingroom, grasped the hilts of their swords, and with much difficulty parted, amid their hostess's screams for the guard. In 1729 Townshend, finding that his position was thoroughly secondary, gave his resignation, and retired with dignity and honour into private life. He never returned to public affairs. Chesterfield once went to beg him to return to the House of Lords, to oppose ministers on important business. Townshend replied that he was extremely warm, his temper and his personal feelings might hurry him into things which in his cooler moments he should be sorry for, and that he was firmly determined to have no more to do with public affairs. We can only wonder at the strange position of politics, which has made such honourable demand as Townshend's so uncommon among men whose ambition has missed its mark.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTERISTICS

RULERS who have gained historic fame by war and empire, naturally impose heroic and commanding traits on mankind: rulers who have been great in peace usually move us by the qualities of a wise and benign morality. Sir Robert Walpole's position is in this respect a peculiar one. He was a powerful ruler, who guided the country through a long and profoundly critical ordeal; yet his name possesses no heroic associations. He was a great peace minister, yet his career suggests neither the attractions of private virtue nor the inspiration of lofty public ideals. It is impossible to make one of the grand heroic figures of human history out of nothing more sublime than strong sagacity, penetrating common-sense, and tenacious public spirit. Both the nature of Walpole's task and the characteristics of his time were fatal to the heroic. *Quicquid non movere* was a sound and saving maxim for a British minister from the Peace of Utrecht to the Seven Years' War; but it is a maxim without lustre. Although, however, there is nothing in such a character as Walpole's to dazzle or to inspire, he possessed in the highest degree, and displayed

portraits convey no striking impression of character. The glance is firm, but the ruling trait is a somewhat unattractive complacency. Songs and caricatures abound in references to an everlasting expression between a smile and a sneer. "His face was bronzed over a glare of confidence," says his enemy in the *Craftsman*; "an arch malignity leered in his eye." The malignity is certainly not there, but the confidence is. In his early days handsome and portly, he grew afterwards to be corpulent and unwieldy, though he rode to his death almost to the last.

He was the gayest and easiest of companions. Pope was his intimate of Bolingbroke, Swift, and others of his party's bitterest foes, and yet he paid to the enemy the tribute of those graceful lines—

"Seen him I have; but in his happier hour
Of social pleasure ill-exchanged for power;
Seen him unnumbered with the venal tribe,
Smile without art and win without a bribe."

"I could have done you good," his son said, "to hear him speak." As another said of him, in an admirable phrase, "He laughed the heart's laugh." Speaker Onslow said that his goodness of heart made him the best man to live with and to live under, that he ever knew. Pulteney, who had been his friend and quarrelled with him, and

reporting the parliamentary debates that the Whigs should have the worst of it, still admired Walpole for his placability, and admitted that he was a fine fellow.

A contemporary story gives a singular glimpse of the easy terms on which Walpole stood with men who one day denounced him as the vilest of wretches. Pulteney, though he had seceded from the regulars of his party, supposed, childish enough, that the virtue of his principles would remain in him if he continued to sit on Whig benches. One day,

“Mr. Pulteney, sitting upon the same bench with Robert Walpole in the House of Commons, said: ‘Sir Robert, I have a favour to ask of you.’ ‘O, my good friend Pulteney,’ said Sir Robert, ‘what favour can you have to ask of me?’ ‘It is,’ said Mr. Pulteney, ‘that Dr. Pearce may not suffer in his preferment for being my friend.’ ‘I promise you,’ returned Sir Robert, ‘that he shall not.’ ‘Why, Sir,’ I hope,’ said Mr. Pulteney, ‘that you will give him the deanery of Wells.’ ‘No,’ replied Sir Robert, ‘I cannot promise you that for him, for it is already promised.’”

Walpole gave Pulteney's friend another deanery. Pulteney, thinking gratitude for private favours a less virtue than regard for the public weal, wrote to the dean to vote for Sir Robert's man if there was

House of Commons is very superficial, and there was nothing to prevent Pulteney, after writing to his dean, from fulminating against the enormities of Walpole in buying votes by conferring places.

Like his father before him, Walpole was a lover of company. There are few more curious pictures of conviviality under difficulties than that of George I., after a morning's hunting at Richmond, drinking punch and talking dog Latin with Walpole all the afternoon. The minister was not a drunkard, as Harley, Carteret, and Daniel Pulteney all were. Though he probably consumed a quantity that in modern opinion would constitute a hard drinker, he was too laborious and systematic a worker all his life to have been habitually addicted to gross excess. The vast augmentation of public business since his day, due to extension of dominion, to immense increase of population, to rapidity and multiplicity of communications, to the vigilance of the newspapers, and to the boundless activity and exactingness of a reformed House of Commons, has doubtless made a great difference in the weight of ministerial burdens. Still there will always be industrious ministers and lazy ministers, whether the work of the department be heavy or light; and Walpole was one of the most industrious ministers that ever sat in Downing Street.² Some of his industry

¹ Quoted from Pearce by Coxe, ch. xxxix. iii. 46.

² At this time the house, which is now No. 10 Downing Street.

slavery of transcribing whole letters from other people, and we are assured that the family papers abounded with extracts from dispatches, and memoranda upon them, which prove his indefatigable exertions. He always thought for himself, and never fell into the too common weakness of allowing subordinates in the office to think for him. He never meddled with the business of others, and never allowed others to do his own. Like most, though not quite all great workers, he was both rapid and methodical. He was contrasted by contemporaries with the Duke of Newcastle. The duke was all hurry and confusion, while Sir Robert, who had ten times the amount of business, was never in a hurry. "He did everything with the same ease and tranquillity as if he was doing nothing."

Walpole was none the less devoted in his application to serious affairs for being a keen sportsman. George II expressed his contempt for men of quality who spent their time in tormenting a poor fox, that was generally a much better beast than any of those that pursued him, inasmuch as the fox hurts no other animal but for his subsistence, while those brutes who hurt him did it only for the pleasure of hurting. But he forgave Walpole for this obnoxious relaxation, because all the other eleven months of the year he gave up to the business of his prince. Besides his sport in Norfolk, Walpole hunted

Mr. "I put off my cares," he said, "when I put off clothes."

Walpole's faults of external demeanour were of a kind of which our own age has become intolerant. His conversation was such as to-day would send all the company flying from the room. He had that very sorry quality which Chesterfield calls his desire to be thought to have had a polite and happy turn for gallantry, and he was proud of his successes with a coarseness that would have caused instant expulsion from the mess of any garrison regiment on circuit in Great Britain. His extraordinary laxity of private morality reached to so incredible a degree, that he seems to have been indifferent to the infidelity of his own wife, and to the legitimacy of his eldest son's eldest boy, though the boy was heir to the Walpole peerage.

Polite people complained of a want of dignity in Walpole's manners; it was the natural consequence of a want of moral dignity in his character. Policy may have had a share in it. A hearty kind of frankness, which sometimes seemed impudence, says Chesterfield, made the world think that he let them into his secrets, and the impoliteness of his manners seemed to show his sincerity. Though he was boisterous in his ways, and though he appears never to have lost his Norfolk accent, it is a caricature to compare him with the Westerns and

pleasure from such pursuits." Yet there was nothing illiterate or uneducated about his speeches. The standard books contain passages from his great speech on the Peerage Bill; they are as far as possible from the vein of Squire Western. Onslow says that this performance had as much eloquence and genius in it, as had ever up to that time been heard in Parliament. The speech on the Triennial Bill (1734) is a masterpiece of ready invective and of argument. Chatham declared that the attack on Wyndham on the occasion of the secession (1740) was one of the finest speeches he ever heard. Horvey's report of Walpole's address to his political friends on the withdrawal of the excise scheme, shows it to have had not only animation and energy, but dignity. His political pamphlets are clear and straightforward statements in sound English. His reported conversations, and some of his private correspondence, show Walpole to have had both neatness and facility in the trick of Latin quotation. It is true that in one of the best known parliamentary anecdotes of the time, he once lost a guinea by a blunder in a very familiar verse. He quoted Horace's line as

"Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpa."

Pulteney replied that his Latin was as bad as his logic, and that the right words were *nulla pallescere culpa*. Walpole offered to bet him a guinea. The clerk at the table rose it against the minister, who threw the coin

was no worse than Burke's false quantity when
ed, *magnum rectigal est parcimonia*. Yet Burke was
iterate.

ce other charges against Walpole, his offence in
ng the door of patronage in the face of genius has
made far too much of. We have already seen that
eured two hundred pounds a year to the author
Night Thoughts. He offered a pension to Pope,
declined on the ground that he never thought
f so warm in any party's cause as to deserve
money. He subscribed for ten copies of Field-
works in 1743, though Fielding had abused him.
nt the unfortunate Savage bank notes. He insisted
Prior, Steele, and Addison had all shown that the
accomplished men of letters make the worst men
airs; but to please a friend he made Congreve a
missioner of Customs, predicting, however, that they
find he had no head for business. It is true
he disappointed the expectations of Swift, and
y incurred the formidable enmity of that powerful
; but I see no reason why we should condemn
le for leaving the unhappy man at "wretched
n in miserable Ireland."¹ It is true that he looked
writing as a mechanical business, and "took up
ny pen that he could find in public offices"; but
le might well think that when the hack pam-
er had marketed his quinees, all the honour had

1742 he took the keenest interest in a Domenichino which was too long on its way to England, and at his fall he alarmed his son by proposing a journey to Bologna, Florence, and Rome to see the galleries of the collection, or most of it, afterwards found its way to Petersburg, when Walpole's grandson was driven to sell money on the treasures of his ancestors, like the *carri* and Pallavicini before him.

Lord Campbell whimsically complains that Walpole is responsible, by his utter neglect of literature, for the literary men, for giving to official life in England "aristocratic feeling and vulgar business-like tone which it has ever since retained." As if there were any connection between the cause and its alleged effect. Walpole did less for men of letters than the younger Pitt, than any minister ever held, in transacting public business, and with no more or less vulgar tone. As for Walpole infecting public life with aristocratic feeling, it is worth remembering that he belonged to no great family, and formed no powerful connections. When men talk of the Venetian oligarchy, or patrician Whigs, they forget that the patrician oligarchy was controlled in its palmyest days by a plain country gentleman. This was one of the taunts most commonly flung at him by his enemies, as it was a source of great pride to his own family. Walpole's feeling, in truth, was much less aristocratic than it was bourgeois. The

language of an elevated imagination. Still, as his son said, his eloquence was made for use. He had a powerful voice and little gesture, and is described by contemporaries as an artful rather than an eloquent speaker, fluent, ready, and vigorous in reply, with great skill in catching the humour of the House, and singular success in unfolding intricate matters, making people see what they understood when they did not. He was right in leaving the declamations of Pitt un-answered, and in thinking that he had done enough to meet the homely contentions of Sir John Eborac. A solid reply to a solid argument was worth more than a library of flashy classical references, delusive verbal parallels, and all the rest of the elegant clap-net which Bolingbroke absurdly called the philosophy of the Tory. The first qualification in one who aspires to a leading place in the counsels of a nation is, that he should have sound and penetrating judgment; the second is ample and accurate knowledge of the business of the day; and the third is tenacity of will and firmness of character. All this is the very root of political power, and the root of the matter Walpole had. His arts of management were a useful, perhaps an indispensable, adjunct. Nevertheless, it was not the management alone or even principally,—it was the practical grasp of the facts of public business,—which enabled Walpole to survive at the same time fourteen

Burke rightly contends that Walpole's faults were superficial. "A careless, coarse, and over-familiar style of discourse, without sufficient regard to persons or occasions, and an almost total want of political decorum, were the errors by which he was most hurt in public opinion." It is certainly a mistake to dismiss Walpole as a pure cynic. He laughed at the patriotic professions of his opponents, but then they deserved no better. He refused to expect too much from men, but this is a virtue, and not a vice, in one who has to govern men as they are, and not as the moralist nobly strives to make them. Government, like all the practical arts, means the overcoming of difficulties. It is the greatest of the practical arts, because its ends are the highest, and the difficulties the most subtle, complex, and incalculable. The world will never place Walpole in the highest rank among those who have governed men, for in the world's final estimate character goes farther than act, imagination than utility, and its leaders strike us as much by what they were as by what they did. But Walpole was high enough for his task; he possessed the qualities and mastered the maxims that it required. There are few difficulties, Walpole said in his letters to Pelham after his own career was closed, "that cannot be surmounted, if properly and resolutely engaged in. . . . It is a pity that you have not time, for time and

ing that he would always stand by the
"I advise my young men," Walpole said,
r to use *always*." He had the true political tem-
ent, which makes it possible for a man to be at
ntrepid and circumspect. No statesman ever ad-
more consistently to all the great articles of his
but, as Hervoy says, "he had been too long
sant in business not to know that in the fluctua-
human affairs and variety of accidents to which
st concerted schemes are liable, they must often
ppointed who build on the certainty of the most
le events; and therefore seldom turned his
ts to the provisional warding off future evils which
or might not happen; or the scheming of remote
ages, subject to so many intervening crosses; but
applied himself to the present occurrence, studying
generally hitting upon the properest method to
re what was favourable, and the best expedient
ricate himself out of what was difficult." Satis-
at he was striving for some broad and honest end,
not always rigorous as to means. "*He durst do*
says his son, "*but he durst do wrong too.*" Grave and
are the dangers of the courage to do wrong; yet,
whole, Walpole must be pronounced to have got
it for more wrong than he ever did.

accusation that Walpole was intensely wedded to

business; they were not to be deterred from
to acquire the habit and the passion for it; and they
were never led into temptation by having any real
chance of seizing power, after Mr. Pitt once rose above
the horizon. A man may be a resplendent rhetorician
like Burke, or he may have commanding views on politics
like Fox, without being eager for personal power; but as
a rule a practical statesman, conscious of ability for a
ruling part in large public transactions, will be as fond of
power as Walpole was or as Pitt. Walpole, moreover,
like most great ministers, identified his own personality
with high objects of national policy; private triumphs
were never separated in his mind from the success of
public causes; and he insisted on having power, because
he was convinced that he knew how to use it well. But
bad or feeble men, it may be argued, often think the
same. The Duke of Newcastle was in his own particular
way as fond of power as Walpole. This only shows that
the love of power is in itself neither a virtue nor a vice.
"My Lord," said Chatham to the Duke of Devonshire,
"I am sure that I can save this country, and that no-
body else can." There are times when it is a statesman's
duty to insist upon power. The only question with
which history needs to concern itself is not whether
Walpole was intensely wedded to power, but whether
his possession and use of it were important for the
public good.

...the life than give, is unfortunately too certain.
...s on morals tell us that conduct has an æsthetic
...n ethical aspect; it is beautiful or ugly, as well as
...or wrong. Walpole's counsels to Queen Caroline,
...ter her death to the king's own daughters, were
...ous and disgusting, apart from their immorality.
...ertain, too, that, as some say, he had not the
...te sense of honour which marks the ideal public

But it cannot be disguised that many men have
... a want of a fine sense of honour, whom still
...ould hesitate to brand generally as either un-
...ulous or unprincipled. Chatham acted in a way
...as not at all to his honour, when he first offered
...en Walpole, and then on his offer being repulsed,
...bled the violence of his attack. George III did
...shabby, cunning, and unscrupulous things, yet
...ion is gradually coming to pass him off as a very
...t gentleman. Did Mr. Pitt exhibit perfect delicacy
...our when, on coming back to power in 1804, he
...d the stubborn king to ostracise Mr. Fox? Yet
...s usually treated as the pink of moral elevation, and
...undoubtedly take a loftier view of the connection
...en public authority and private honour than had
...the fashion before his time. The equity of history
...es that we shall judge men of action by the standards
...n of action. Nobody would single out highminded-

nor arrogant. He was wholly free from spite and from envy; he bore no malice, though when he had once found a man out in playing tricks, he took care never to forget it; and he was right, for the issues at stake were too important to allow him to forget.

It is said that he could not brook a colleague of superior ability, and that he took care to surround himself with mediocrities like the Duke of Newcastle. We may test the accusation by the conduct of Chatham. Nobody has ever taunted him with this ignoble jealousy, yet he acted precisely as Walpole acted. After fighting against Newcastle as long as he could, he gave way to him just as Walpole had found it expedient to do. "I borrowed the Duke of Newcastle's majority," said Pitt in 1757, "to carry on the public business." It was his majority, not his mediocrity, that Walpole valued. So with the proscriptions. Pitt peremptorily excluded Henry Fox from his famous administration, though Fox was the ablest debater in Parliament; and he declined to advance Charles Townshend, who was more near to being his intellectual equal than anybody else then in the House of Commons. Neither in Pitt's case nor Walpole's case is it necessary to ascribe their action to anything worse than the highly judicious conviction that whether in carrying out a great policy of peace like Walpole's, or an arduous policy of war like Pitt's, the very

ness and personal fidelity he could safely trust; not one of them, let us not forget to add, who, for years after his fall, ever showed himself any able to work with other colleagues and leaders, he had been to work with Walpole.

Walpole took the pleasures, the honours, the prizes of the world as they came in his way, and he thoroughly had and enjoyed them; but what his heart was really set upon all the time—seriously, persistently, passionately, devotedly—was the promotion of good government and the frustration and confusion of its enemies. When men got in his way, he thrust them out without misgiving or remorse, just as a commander in the field would remove a meddling, wrong-headed, or incompetent general of division without misgiving. But to be remorseless is a very different thing from being unscrupulous. I am not aware of a single proof that Walpole ever began those intrigues against his enemies, which they were always so ready to set on foot against him. It was Stanhope and Sunderland, not Walpole, who began and carried out the intrigues which ended in the schism of 1717. It was Carteret who began with the Tory leaders against his own colleagues and ended in Sunderland's death. It was Bolingbroke and the Marquis of Kenedal who strove by underhand arts to give access for the former to George I. and when

worked in unbroken cordiality for the best part of thirty years, and with whom he did loyally share power, himself in a relation rather subordinate than otherwise, for ten of these years. It was Townshend, moreover, who at the last took advantage of his journey with the king to Hanover, secretly to ingratiate himself in the royal favour to the disadvantage of Walpole at home. Plenty of intriguing was carried on, but not by Walpole. A candid and particular examination of the political history of that time, so far as the circumstances are known to us, leads to the conclusion that of all his contemporaries, from men of genius like Bolingbroke and Carteret, from able and brilliant men like Townshend and Chesterfield, Wyndham and Pulteney, down to a mediocre personage like the Duke of Newcastle, Walpole was the least unscrupulous of the men of that time, the most straightforward, bold, and open, and the least addicted to scheming and cabal. He relied more than they did, not less, upon what after all in every age is the only solid foundation of political power, though it may not always lead to the longest terms of office—upon his own superior capacity, more constant principle, firmer will, and clearer vision.

- That Walpole practised what would now be regarded as parliamentary corruption is undeniable. But political conduct must be judged in the light of political

Many years after Walpole, Lord North used the loans, and it was not until the younger Pitt offered example that any minister saw the least in keeping a portion of a public loan in his own for distribution among his private friends. For after to buy the vote of a member of Parliament it then thought much more shameful, than almost to our own time it has been thought shameful for a member of Parliament to buy the vote of an elector. Is it a greater sin against political purity to give a member a hundred pounds for his vote, than to advance a thousand for the purchase of his seat? Yet even when Pitt laughed, as Walpole might have laughed, at the called the squeamish and maiden coyness of the House of Commons, in hesitating to admit the right of owners of rotten boroughs to be compensated for disfranchisement of their property. It is absurd to say that Walpole first tempted mankind into rapacious selfishness. Even his enemies admitted that corruption had been gaining ground ever since the time of Charles II. Nobody denies that in all its forms, in quality alike of members and of constituencies was no worse thirty years after Walpole's disappearance, than anybody ever asserted it to be in his time. To say that some modern writers, that Walpole organised corruption as a system, that he made corruption the

be entitled. With unanswerable force it has been
by Sir Robert Peel and other men of experience
public affairs, how it came about that if Walpole
really corrupt his age, and if the foundation
strength was the systematic misapplication of the
money to the purposes of bribery, yet a Select Committee
of twenty-one members—nineteen of them his
enemies—appointed after his fall to lay a siege to his
past life equal in duration to the siege of Troy, found
no specific facts to support the allegations of corruption,
which had been used every week and every day for
many years to inflame public resentment against him.
Two of the great heads of accusation shrunk to
miserable dimensions, and the third remained a
cloud of vague and unsupported inference. Would
and impotent a conclusion have been possible if
substantial grounds for the accusation had been in existence?

The charge of undue influence at elections ended
in the production of a mere mouse from the lair of the
mountain. Walpole appears to have promised that he
would give a place in the revenue service at Weymouth, in
order to secure a returning officer of the right colour;
he removed some customs officers who declined to
return the right candidate; and to have disbursed some
sums for legal proceedings in boroughs. Was there
nothing like the lavish purchase of boroughs to

and pounds for his serouans, or buying three seats
Lord Falmouth for seven thousand five hundred
, though the bargain nearly went off because he
not make the pounds guineas.¹ Walpole never
shed such a scale as this.

, again, did the article of conceding fraudulent
ts produce any more appalling disclosure than
the single case of a not very large contract for
nt of troops in Jamaica, the terms had been
ously handsome. Finally, the grand accusation of
ion and profusion in the expenditure of the
service money can be placed no higher than a
al inference from a doubtful figure. The com-
founded their case on the amount of the secret
money. That amount they pronounced to be so
ve that it could only be explained by a corrupt
proper destination. They took a period for the
es of comparison, at their own will and pleasure.
secret service money during the ten years from
o 1717 only amounted to three hundred and
ight thousand pounds. The same head under
e's administration from 1731 to 1741 was no less
ne million four hundred and forty thousand
. Therefore, they argued--and modern writers
tent with their argument--a large proportion of
monse expenditure of secret service money in
e's government was devoted to the direct pur-

does not necessarily or even reasonably follow from it.¹ The ten years from 1707 to 1717 were arbitrarily chosen; if the first ten years of Anne or of George I. had been taken, the figure would have been much higher, and therefore more favourable to Walpole. The items of the account, moreover, are taken in one way, in order to attenuate the figure of the first period, and in another way, when the object is to expand the figure of the second period; certain payments were charged to the secret service fund in one case, which in the other case had either not been made, or else had gone to another account. The comparative statement is therefore fallacious. Fairly measured, this branch of expenditure, so far as it covered a really secret employment of money which it would be against the interest of the public service to disclose, amounted during ten years of Walpole's administration to less than an annual average of seventy-nine thousand pounds; and that, according to Coxe, is much less than the sum expended for similar purposes during a similar term of years before the revolution.

Let us, however, suppose that the amount was even higher than this. Why are we to assume as a matter of course that most of it was spent in buying members or boroughs, rather than in the avowed objects of buying secret intelligence both at home and from abroad, and in buying foreign ministers? It is certain

obscurer and more intricate than the diplomatic
vires of Madrid, Vienna, or Versailles. Walpole
sely willing to pay handsomely for good informa-
out them. It was said of him that while he was
to his friends, his liberality was literally un-
d to his tools and his spies. Even in our day,
tish minister has ventured to dispense with
s of this odious kind, and every minister still
properly refuses to account to Parliament or to any
for a shilling of it. That some of this money
n bribes to members of Parliament, it would be
a to deny. We shall presently come upon an
e where nine hundred pounds was paid to two
s of the House of Commons for their support,
p. 195). Let us take that as incontrovertible.
goes a very little way towards the broad accusa-
at we are examining. The very fact that the
rumbled loudly at a transaction which cost no
man nine hundred pounds, shows that such trans-
did not usually mount up to a very large propor-
one hundred and forty-four thousand pounds a
The one detailed case, therefore, that can be
l to support the assumption that most of the
service money at Walpole's disposal went in
entary corruption, itself shows that the assump-
altogether exaggerated and extravagant. The

ately ready the great majority of the committee were to procure evidence good or bad at any price, it is surely incredible that, if corruption had been practised on anything approaching to the vast and systematic scale which is so loosely imputed, not one single case should have been forthcoming.

The substance of the charge of corruption is to be sought, not in occasional payment of blackmail to a member or a patron, but in the fact that he reserved the Crown patronage, down to the last morsel, exclusively for members of his own party. He acted on the principle that is accepted in the United States, that is not disavowed in France, and that, although disavowed in Great Britain, has not even yet wholly disappeared there. A member of Parliament who desired anything, from a lucrative office for himself down to a place as tide-waiter for the son of a tenant, knew that his only chance would be to support the administration. The number of offices held by men in Parliament was very great. When Burke introduced his famous scheme of economical reform (1780), he boasted that it would destroy influence equal to the offices of at least fifty members of Parliament. In Walpole's time the number of place-holders at the pleasure of the Court must have been considerably in excess of fifty; for the place-bill of 1743 had excluded a certain number of subordinate

These gentlemen should be sound Whigs. To content, acting especially on the owners of boroughs, systematically affected the disinterestedness and influence of the House of Commons.

Walpole has no doubt suffered much in the opinion of posterity, as the supposed author of the shallow and apophthegm, that "*every man has his price.*" who know nothing else about Walpole, believe repeat this about him. Yet the story is a pure and gross misrepresentation. He never delivered himself of any famous slander on mankind. One day, mocking the hypocrisy and declamatory professions of some of the Whigs in opposition, he insisted on finding self-interest or selfish interest at the bottom of their fine things. "*All men,*" he said, "*have their price.*" "As to the Whigs," he told the king, "I know the reasons and I know the price of every one of them." Nor was he ever as time showed. It was not a general but a particular proposition, and as a particular proposition it was true. When an honest man came in his way, he knew him well enough. "I will not say," he would add, "who is corrupt, but I will say who is not, and that is Shippen." And yet "honest Shippen" was the stoutest of his opponents.

The absence of any tangible evidence of novel, extraordinary, lavish, and widespread parliamentary

important transactions of those times (*Regicide Pe*
His writings, as everybody knows, contain more than
passage showing that he had informed himself about
pole's character and acts ; and in truth much of the
writer's theoretic wisdom is but the splendid gene
tion of the great minister's particular policy and pr
What Burke has to say on the point that we are
discussing is this :—"Walpole was an honourable
and a sound Whig. He was not, as the Jacobites
discontented Whigs of his own time have repre
him, and as ill-informed people still represent him
prodigal and corrupt minister. They charged him
their libels and seditious conversations, as having
reduced corruption to a system. Such was their
But he was far from governing by corruption.
governed by party attachments. The charge of
tematic corruption is less applicable to him, per
than to any minister who ever served the crown
so great a length of time. He gained over votes
from the opposition."—(*Appeal from New to Old I*
Evidence of this kind, coming from a man of all
the generation immediately following, in contact
some actors in those events and with many who
have known about them at first hand, must over
any amount of sweeping presumptions by his
writing a century and a half after Walpole's fall.

the rejection of the bill for lowering the interest on funds. He got time enough, says Hervey, "to go to talk to people, to solicit, to intimidate, to argue, to persuade, and perhaps to bribe." This may be taken as a fair example of his usual practice. Bribery was an expedient in the last resort, and the appeal to cupidity after appeals to friendship, to fear, to reason, and to those mixed motives, creditable, permissible, and venial, which guide votes in reformed and unreformed parliaments alike.

The pecuniary affairs of public men are no concern of the outside world, unless they are tainted with dishonesty. So many charges were made against Walpole on this head, that it is necessary to glance at them. I will begin with the least serious. Very early in his career of minister Walpole was taunted with abusing patronage by granting places and reversions of places to his relatives. When his son Horace was little more than a child, he was made Clerk of the Estreats and Collector of the Pipe, with a salary of three hundred pounds a year. At the age of eighteen or nineteen, he became Inspector of Customs; on resigning that post a year later he was made Usher of the Exchequer, then worth five hundred pounds a year; and Horace Walpole was able to boast that from the age of twenty he was no stranger to his family. The duty of the Usher was to supply paper pens ink wax sand tape penknives

a year; and in 1739 he gave him the gigantic post of Auditor of the Exchequer, with a salary of three thousand pounds. Then when the eldest son received the Pells on receiving the Auditorship, the Pells the three thousand a year went to Edward Walpole, the next brother.¹ All these great patent offices were sinecures; they were always executed by deputy, and the principal had not a week's work to do from the beginning of the annual quarter-day to the last. We can imagine how these rank abominations would stink in the nostrils of the House of Commons and the Treasury to-day. It is worth remembering that Burke, when he proposed his famous plan of economical reform (1780), though he admitted that the magnitude of the profits in the patent offices called for reformation, still looked on the complacency on an Exchequer list filled with the descendants of the Walpoles, the Pelhams, and the Townshends, and maintained the expediency of the indirect provisions for the families of great men and their servants. Indirect rewards have long disappeared, and nothing is more certain than that the whole system of political pension, even as a direct and personal reward, is drawing to an end. Whether either the public interest or the efficiency of political service will gain by the change, is not so certain. Walpole at least can hardly be censured for doing what, in the very height of

Alpole's head. He was roundly and constantly
ed with sustaining a lavish private expenditure by
tion from public funds.¹ The palace which he
for himself in Norfolk was matter for endless
al. He planted gardens, people said, in places to
the very earth had to be transported in waggons.
t fountains flowing and cascades tumbling, where
was to be conveyed by long aqueducts and costly
nes. He was a modern Sardanapalus, imitating
travagance of Oriental monarchs at the expense of
people whom he was at once impoverishing and
ing. They described him as going down to his
y seat loaded with the spoils of an unfortunate
. He had purchased most of the county of Nor-
nd held at least one-half of the stock of the Bank
gland. It was plainly hinted that in view of a
le impeachment at some future day, he had made
f safe by investing one hundred and fifty thousand
s in jewels and plate as an easily portable form of
us, in the popular doggerel of the day --

“ But a few years ago,
As we very well know,
He scarce had a guinea his job in ;
But by bribing of friends,
To serve his dark ends,
Now worth a full million is Robin.

“ As oft hath he said
That our debts should be paid,
And the nation be eased of her throbbing ;

dam, Vienna, and Genoa, to be ready for him in case of untoward accidents.

These lively fabrications undoubtedly represented the common rumour and opinion of the time, and were excellently fitted to nourish the popular dislike with which Walpole came to be regarded. They had their origin in the same suspicious temper towards an unpopular minister, which two generations before had made the people of London give to Clarendon's new palace in Piccadilly the name of Dunkirk House, and which a generation later prompted the charge that Lord Bute's great house and park at Luton had come out of the bribes of France. They had hardly more solid foundation than the charge of saturating Parliament with corruption. The truth seems to be that Walpole, like both the Pitts, was inexact and careless about money. Profusion was a natural element in a large, loose, jovial character like his, too incessantly preoccupied with business, power, government, and high affairs of State to have much regard for a wise private economy. He was supposed to contribute handsomely towards the expense of fighting elections.¹ He expended in building, adding, and improving at Houghton the sum of two hundred

¹ Coxe (ch. 45) quotes from Etough the utterly incredible story that Walpole spent 60,000*l.* out of his private fortune at the general election of 1734. Etough himself, I find, only says that he heard

ing to the standard of to-day, for keeping open house for a whole county for several weeks in a vast establishment like Houghton. His collection of pictures was set down by Horace Walpole as having cost him forty thousand pounds more; but this I suspect to be a very doubtful figure, for according to a contemporary letter in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, so many of the pictures were presents, that the whole cost could hardly have reached thirty thousand pounds; and it is worth noting that the famous Guido, the gem of the collection, while it cost him some six hundred pounds, was valued in the catalogue when it came to be sold to the Czarina at three thousand five hundred. For all this outlay, his foes contended that the income of his estate and the known salary of his offices were inadequate. They assumed, therefore, that the requisite funds were acquired by the sale of honours, places, and pensions, and by the plunder of the secret service money.

This charitable hypothesis is not really required by the facts, for we have a very tolerable explanation without it. In the first place, rents all over England had gone up by more than one-third, and in some counties they had much more than doubled themselves, since Walpole had come into his property. As I have stated, when his father died, in 1700, the rental of the Norfolk estates was upwards of two thousand pounds. Within

Scheme did not prevent him from turning his domain to account by dealing in South Sea stock. "I have just sold out," he said at one moment, "at a thousand per cent, and I am fully satisfied."² Even a moderate transaction closed at a profit of a thousand per cent would produce a substantial contribution towards the building of Houghton or the purchase of thirty thousand pounds worth of pictures. Walpole's success, it should be stated, was not due to any favour from the South Sea promoters, such as ruined Aislaburne, Craggs, and Sunderland. They hated him for his unflinching denunciation of their project, and whatever success he made in this way was due to his own penetration and the good information which he got from his confidential agents. Fourth, when Walpole died, in 1745, he left a heavy mortgage on Houghton, and a further debt of fifty thousand pounds. Fifth, he enjoyed the emoluments of his offices for five and twenty years. This item deserves some examination.

The amount of ministerial salaries in the eighteenth century is only to be ascertained by search in the oblique region of the issue books of the Exchequer, reports

¹ This is Coxe's estimate, but in Mr. Ewald's *Life of Walpole* (published in 1878) it is stated on the authority of a lately deceased member of the Walpole family that the rental was understated by Coxe (Ewald, p. 212). Horace Walpole puts it at a nominal thousand pounds a year.

presumably down to a much later date, the modern punctuality of public payments was unknown. A Secretary of State makes light of having to write to a minister abroad apologising for her Majesty's backwardness in paying her servants. A minister at home, he says, can find some resources and make some shift or other to go on, but that those who serve abroad should be in arrears is indeed a great shame.² Even the most disinterested of public servants to-day may be startled to find a Secretary of State declaring that he had actually heard nothing of his regular salary for two years.³ We may safely assume that a Chancellor of the Exchequer at least was able to protect himself against these inconvenient arrears in his own case.

Let us now see how much Walpole drew from the king's purse. From Godolphin's day down to the second administration of the Duke of Portland in 1807 there were invariably five lords of the Treasury when the Treasury was in commission. The allowance was 8000*l.* a year, which was divided into equal sums of 1600*l.* for each lord, reduced by various deductions to a net salary of 1220*l.* apiece. But the First Lord, in view of his great responsibilities, received additional pay out of the secret

² This task has been recently performed by Mr. Edward Hamilton, of the Treasury, a singularly competent hand, and I count myself fortunate in being able to give to my readers the benefit of some of the fruits of his diligent and exact inquiries.

be received at the Exchequer. This transfer of
from secret service to the Civil List in 1782 was
followed, as everybody knows, at the great reset
of 1831 by its removal to the annual votes submitted
Parliament. We may take it as reasonably certain
Walpole received as First Lord the same sum, in
secret service money, as is to-day voted to the
minister by the House of Commons. He also received
a share of New Years' gifts, but the amount was
small. There is no positive evidence that either the First Lord
or the other Commissioners of the Treasury received
anything out of the fee fund, though it may possibly
have been a practice in those slovenly times for the
Lord to enrich himself out of perquisites. This, however,
was not all. During the hundred years preceding
Liverpool's administration in 1812, the First Lord of the
Treasury more often than not was also Chancellor of the
Exchequer. Originally the salary of this office was com-
bined as it was with that of Under Treasurer, and was
more than the modest sum of 200*l*. A further addition
of 1600*l*. was made in 1713 "in lieu of perquisites."
After being discontinued for three years, this payment was
revived in 1716 in favour of Sir Robert Walpole, and
afterwards formed a regular annual charge, bringing the
emoluments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, together
up to 1800*l*. a year. He also received certain

of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was therefore
pole's time about 2400*l.*, and when, as in Walpole's
his office was held in conjunction with the post of
Lord, the total income was about 7400*l.* a year.
le, it may be observed, did not enjoy the salary
came to Lord North, Mr. Pitt, and Lord Liver-
s Wardens of the Cinque Ports, and which, having
usly to 1778 been from 1100*l.* to 1500*l.* a year,
between that date and 1827, when it was abol-
at a substantial net figure not much below 3000*l.*
then two of his successors at the head of the
nment before the end of the century drew 10,000*l.*
, Walpole's official income was almost exactly the
as that which was attached to the two offices of
Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the
quer, when they were held together by the same
er in 1873, and again from 1880 to 1882.¹ To
um we must add some 2000*l.* a year for the patent
in the Customs, making a gross total of over
a year of public money. Let it be remarked, in
sion, that the king kept a very tight hand upon
penditure on secret service, and that the supposi-
at the minister was free to dip his hand into that
t his own discretion and pleasure, is a mere mis-
ension.

There is nothing unreasonable in supposing that Wal-
pole's official income far exceeded any outlay in which it

tuous or costly entertainments, and who drew less than two hundred thousand pounds of public money, should yet have died fifty-two thousand pounds richer. Whatever Pitt's secret may have been, Walpole's financial stances were tolerably clear. His sons were provided for at the public cost; he had a fortune with his hands; he made something of a fortune by speculation; his capital was ample, but there was no outrageous waste or unmeasured profusion; he had for twenty years a clear income from his lands and his offices of thirteen or fourteen thousand a year; and besides debt secured on his property he owed fifty thousand pounds when he died. His account shows that like so many other great benefactors, Walpole was no thrifty steward of his public fortunes, but it shows also that his expenditures were perfectly explained out of known and avowed sources, so that the imputation of personal corruption and of public plunder—never openly made, be it observed—on a responsible person—is wholly unnecessary, groundless, and unsupported; and that the time has come when the reckless calumnies of unscrupulous opponents, which with masks on, should be at last dropped from the history of a good servant of his country.

CHAPTER VII

THE CABINET

great constitutional question of the eighteenth century, as every reader knows, was whether the government of the realm should be parliamentary or monarchical. Was it to be an absolute rule of the king; as Cromwell sought, a Parliament making laws and levying money, co-ordinate with the authority of the monarch, and not meddling with the executive; or a Parliament containing, nominating, guiding, and controlling its own executive? Walpole found it easiest, and most natural to work steadily towards the middle of these three systems. A secondary, but hardly less important question turned on the mechanism by which the system could best be made to work.

Walpole's vehement and effectual resistance to the Test Bill proved the strength of his conviction that a hereditary aristocracy was not the system, nor the House of Commons the instrument, for smoothly and successfully to administer the government. (See also the Introduction.)

of nominees of the great families were probably of proportion to their natural weight and influence. In dealing with the House of Commons a minister was dealing with the living and social forces of the country in all their variety. The first question was how to organise them for practical purposes, and Walpole answered it by the principle of Party. He founded his government directly on the support of a Whig majority in the House of Commons, though that majority was in great part due to the assent of powerful members of the House of Lords. The second question was how to keep the administration in gear with the party majority. Walpole's solution was a party Cabinet. The Cabinet system was the key to parliamentary monarchy.

The Act of Settlement did much more than regulate the succession. The Tories consoled themselves by inserting two restrictive constitutional provisions of very remarkable scope. One was an attempt to limit the authority of the Privy Council, by ordaining that such matters and things pertaining to the government of the realm as are by law and custom properly to be transacted in the Privy Council, should be transacted there, and that all resolutions taken there should be signed by such Privy Councillors as should advise and consent to the same. This clause was levelled at the practice which had grown up under Charles II and his brother, of governing through a select Cabinet of the king's servants.

...longer right now these shaped were the constitu-
ideas of the day, and has special bearings on
le's share in our constitutional development. It
d that no holder of office under the king should
able of serving as a member of the House of
ons. A section of only a couple of lines was thus
n, by excluding ministers from the representative
, to divorce the executive from the legislative
a of government. This was by no means in the
or intention of the framers of the Bill. What
desired was to put a stop to the corruption of
ers of Parliament by places and pensions from the
.. The section would have been a remedy for the
c which it was aimed, but it would have funda-
lly transformed the constitution of this country as
derstand it, and at the same time all those numerous
stitutions which are derived or imitated from our own.
h clauses were repealed in the early part of the reign
ne; they never, therefore, came into operation, but
ave an interest of their own in this place. Wal-
work in shaping the constitution may be described
ng it on the very foundations which the fourth and
ections of the Act of Settlement would have made
sible. In other words, the effect of his policy,
it was finally carried through, was to establish the
et on a definite footing as the seat and centre of
ecutive government, to maintain the executive in

choose first to see all the decisive marks of that able system which combines unity, steadfastness, initiative in the executive, with the possession of authority alike over men and measures by the House of Commons, it is certain that it was under Walpole that its ruling principles were first fixed in parliamtary government, and that the Cabinet system received the impression that it bears in our own time.

This is not the place for any inquiry into the letter learning relating to the various royal or privy councils. The name of Cabinet Council, according to the books, first occurs casually in Bacon's *Essays*. Walter Raleigh gave the name of Cabinet Council to a curious collection of political and polemical apophthegms. As a piece of mechanism, a Cabinet is first heard of in the reign of Charles I., and is mentioned by Clarendon and Pepys. Charles II made certain known experiments in the same direction, but as a monarch with Charles's absolutist leanings could not set up any body of private advisers in an established position, within either the letter of the law or the spirit of the constitution. The growth of the Cabinet system has been as gradual, and as apparently fortuitous, as most other articles of our constitutional development. Neither the theory, nor the actual rules and m

es, on the exigencies of the moment, and on the
or the position of the sovereign and of the minister.
really in the reign of Queen Anne that the system
into pretty clear outline. Godolphin forced Sun-
upon the queen in 1706, and he compelled her
ve Harley afterwards. Each of these steps was
ed by the victory of the Whigs in the elections of
So far as it went, this was a recognition of two
principles of the modern system: first, that the
viser of the Crown chooses his colleagues; and
at a Cabinet depends upon a majority in the House
mons. But neither principle made very rapid way.
unsettled were the notions attached to the
f Cabinet, is curiously illustrated in a parlia-
incident of 1711. A motion had been put
of censure on the Cabinet Council for causing
unes in Spain. When the motion came on, the
g was found to have been altered, so as to direct
against the Cabinet, but against ministers. The
m gave rise to a singular discussion. The mover
l it on the ground that the word ministers was
known than the words Cabinet Council. Lord
thought one term just as objectionable as the
Cabinet was unknown in our law; both were
the House ought to know what minister was
t, and whether more than one was intended. A

while the Cabinet Council were those who though nobody knew anything but themselves.¹

No fewer than three distinct bodies are to be recognised during the reign of Anne as taking part in the transaction of public business, apart from the resolutions of Parliament on the one hand, and the orders of the Secretary of State on the other. The treaties of peace and commerce in 1713 are described as having been read in the Great Council, and then ordered to be ratified.² This was evidently little more than a merely formal proceeding, without doubt, but not those of the Privy Council in modern days. It is true that some criticism was offered, but it was reserved for Bolingbroke as unusual and meaningless. A suspicion that had prompted the clause in the Act of Settlement, ministers would hardly have felt themselves safe in ratifying so momentous a set of instruments as the Treaties of Utrecht without this solemnity. A writer of the time, for instance, quoted by Hallam, lays stress on the fact that the chancellor could only make himself responsible by setting the great seal to foreign alliances, on condition that a matter of that consequence had been first discussed and resolved in council.³ The whole circumstances of the Peace of Utrecht were so full of peril and difficulty to the ministers concerned, as later events showed, that

¹ *Parl. Hist.*, vi. 971.

that Walpole and the Marlborough Whigs were
l to the Great Council on this occasion, any more
e Opposition is invited on similar occasions now.
ond, mention is frequently made of a body of
all trace has now disappeared. It is called some-
Committee of Council, and sometimes Lords
Council, and it met usually at the Cockpit
itchall. This body was evidently more restricted
he Privy Council; it was less restricted than
abinet Council, and it was different from the
t in composition.¹ It was perhaps composed
a particular view to collecting the opinion of
ists. Its proceedings were not purely formal;
ly discussed and transacted business, just as
abinet discusses and transacts it now, and as
er executive body does now excepting the
t. The preliminary negotiations of the Treaty
recht were first disclosed to the Lords at the
t, and repeatedly debated and authorised by
Foreign envoys argued their case before them.
authorised the instructions to Lord Strafford on
portant mission to the Hague in 1711. They

a letter of Bolingbroke's (15th December 1711) he talks of
ommittee of Council not sitting till to-morrow night, nor
abinet till Monday." They were evidently therefore two
bodies. Other passages in Bolingbroke's letters referring
Committee of Council are as follows: 2d October and 26th

together upon occasions of moment, which it was to clothe great executive acts with peculiar authority and solemnity. The Privy Council always worked through committees. The Lords at the Cockpit were probably a committee especially formed for foreign affairs, just as the committee where Harley was summoned by Guiscard was a judicial committee, taking cognizance of a charge of high treason. Walpole appointed a committee of the Privy Council to report to Parliament on the charges of corruption against Lord Macclesfield. Against this view, however, that the Lords at Whitehall were a committee on foreign affairs, analogous to the later committee for trade and plantations, we have the circumstance that it was at a meeting of this committee of Council, assembled first at the Cockpit and thence suddenly called to Kensington by the altered condition of the queen, that the famous scene took place which I have already described (p. 38).¹ So far as we know, there is no later reference to it. Whatever may have been the functions of this committee, it was evidently a ministerial council, and the intrusion of opposition Lords was an irregularity. The committee may be regarded as a compromise between the old

¹ The failure to distinguish this body from the Council explains the obscurity and confusion of ordinary accounts of what happened on that memorable day.

the committee. If so, it was a sort of example for conferences which took place in the Parliament 1838 between the Prime Minister and Lord Cairns in reference to the details of the two great Irish measures of the Government, and again in 1884, between the Prime Minister of the day and the leader of the Opposition to settle the redistribution of parliamentary seats. There are those who believe circumstances to be without parallel in history, or at least not easily conceivable under which a select body of eminent statesmen and councillors might come together to take part in the deliberations of the Government, and thus might make the chief men of both Houses jointly responsible for some great act of State. Such combinations of this kind, however, must be viewed with suspicion by everybody who believes that party government is an essential element in the wholesome working of a representative parliamentary government. Such joint responsibility would tend to destroy party ; and its growth in practice might be used both to revive the decaying power of the House of Lords, and even to restore disused authority to the monarch or sovereign who might try to press every question which he happened to feel an interest, towards this or that, to a question of joint solution.

The third group of advisers was the Cabinet. Down to the end of Walpole's time they are referred to as Lords of the Treasury, or the Cabinet Council. The Cabinet is now an informal committee of the Privy Coun-

who sit there no longer. Lord Chancellor describes a Cabinet Council in 1737, at which Archbishop of Canterbury was present, as well as Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, Groom of the Stole. What is still more Bolingbroke, writing to tell the Bishop of Bristol Lord Privy Seal and a plenipotentiary at Utrecht the queen desires to make him Bishop of London consoles him for the change by the assurance that at the head of the diocese of London he will keep his seat in the Cabinet.⁸ We are no more likely again to see a prelate of the Church in the Cabinet, than we are to see one made Lord Keeper. When the inclusion of the primate and the four great officers of the household ceased, it is not easy to tell. In the Rockingham administration of 1765, the Cabinet retained the Duke of Portland as Lord Chamberlain and the Duke of Rutland as Master of the Horse. In the administration which succeeded, the household officers did not appear as of Cabinet rank; and it may be said that the Great Commoner abolished that arrangement. It certainly lasted down to the fall of Walpole.⁴

¹ Bolingbroke to Strafford, 12th August 1712.

² Stanhope to Walpole, 16th January 1717.

³ 2d September 1718.

⁴ See Hervoy's *Memoirs*, iii. 358; Harris's *Life of Hanover*, 365, 404, etc.

ce, after the Pelhams had routed Granville and Bath in 1746, and when the latter held no they made it one of their conditions with the that Bath "might be out of the Cabinet Council."¹ could be no question now of the victors in a at for power bargaining that their defeated rivals d be excluded from attendance at Cabinets ll as from office. Again, it has often been ked that in the younger Pitt's first Cabinet he was ly commoner; but throughout the eighteenth cen- Cabinets were mainly composed of peers. It was ked as an extraordinary proof of Walpole's power n 1733 he insisted on giving the post of First Lord e Admiralty to Sir Charles Wager, though no oner had been thought worthy of that office since cession of the House of Brunswick. The king Wager's want of family distinction an express d of objection, and what is more curious, the an himself thought a purely imaginary genealogy a e recommendation than his real services. In ey's list of the Cabinet at the close of Walpole's ument, Wager and Sir Robert are the only two oners. In the Pelham Government, which after a short interval succeeded Walpole, Henry Pelham he only commoner in the Cabinet, and Pelham, the younger Pitt, was himself the son and the

raised in the House of Lords, in which strong law was used against what had been done, as a result of the Star Chamber, the Holy Inquisition, and so forth. There was no Committee of Council; it had no more authority than any private meeting of lords; it attempted to erect a new jurisdiction. The Lord Chancellor cited an earlier instance of this very extraordinary proceeding, but there seems to be no later.¹

The same reluctance existed in the first forty years of the century, that has been so constantly felt by ministers since, to make precedents for enlarging the Cabinet. The queen had much rather confine the Council, extend it, says Bolingbroke. Unfortunately precedents have set so strongly in the contrary direction during recent years, and the number of ministers necessarily included in a Cabinet has grown so large, that it seems as if the result must inevitably be the formation of an interior junta, small enough to conduct deliberation and decision at close quarters. There will be no more than a return to the system of William III.—a large Cabinet, but the effective body consisting of himself, the Chancellor, and the two Secretaries of State. Walpole, as we might have expected from his character, called meetings of the Cabinet as so

¹ For a full account see Coxe's *Pelham Administration*, ii. 254-263.

age, marked by the peculiarity and possible convenience that no minute of the topics of discussion was necessarily sent to the sovereign, as in the case of formal meetings of the Cabinet. The Cabinet dinner seems to have been dropped as a practice for the last thirty years. It was in full vogue during the Aberdeen Government, but fell into abeyance under Lord Palmerston, who always cared mainly for national defence and foreign relations, and did not choose to sacrifice a social evening to talk about miscellaneous business.

Perhaps the most important of all the distinctions between the Cabinet in its rudimentary stage at the beginning of the century and its later practice, remains to be noticed. Queen Anne held a Cabinet every Sunday, at which she was herself present, just as we have seen that she was present at debates in the House of Lords. With a doubtful exception in the time of George III, no sovereign has been present at a meeting of the Cabinet since Anne, though George II presided on one memorable occasion at a meeting of the Privy Council, which is not easily to be distinguished from a Cabinet.¹ This vital change was probably due to the accident that Anne's successor did not understand the language in which its deliberations were carried on.

¹ Lord Waldegrave in his *Memoirs* mentions a meeting of "the king's principal servants," to consider the Prince of Wales's estab-

There are other illustrations of the change taken place in this direction. For instance Queen herself wrote dispatches to her generals and ministers abroad. Again, when Buys, the Dutch Pensionary, over to argue against the Peace, he had a private audience of the queen, the Secretary of State not being present. The envoy made her a long discourse. She listened to him with great patience, told him that the burdens of the war were too heavy to be longer supported, and desired him to confer with her ministers, not however, the Committee of Council, and not ministerial Cabinet.¹ Maffei had a similar interview on the part of Savoy. No foreign envoy would now be allowed to address the sovereign personally upon national business, though the distinctive mark of an ambassador is to do so, and a minister is not, entitled to personal access to the sovereign. In modern practice, when the Secretary of State introduces an ambassador, it is the Secretary who breaks the seal of the letter of credit before the ambassador presents it to the queen.

Passing from the sovereign to her ministers, we find the relations of the Secretary of State to the Cabinet, at least during the negotiations of the Peace of Utrecht, such as would now be held distinctly unconstitutional. St. John, when Secretary of State, invites the

¹ Bolingbroke's Correspondence, 23d October 1711.

...then him, and to write not merely letters containing
general thread of business which are read in Cabinet,"
also private letters with such secret particulars
may not be properly communicated even to the
yet till the queen should think fit. He explains as
of the advantages of these personal letters that the
minister is under no obligation to leave them behind
in his office.¹ No doubt, private and unofficial
correspondence of that kind is still a common channel
of important information, but no minister would
deliberately hide it from his colleagues for purposes of
his own, as Louis XV worked his sinister system of
the correspondence against his own servants. Boling-
brooke goes much farther. He even sends to the am-
bassador the project of the Peace, without having
communicated it to the Cabinet.² The memorable de-
bate to create twelve peers in a day was taken without
notice to the body, whose collective assent to so
important a step would to-day be regarded as not any
indispensable a preliminary, than the assent of the
sovereign herself.³

It is easy to see to what point the evolution of
the government was brought in Walpole's time and
his influence. Two circumstances were essential to
the growth of this form of government in the British

One was the absence of the sovereign, of which
we have already spoken. How great a difference that

ing legislature from executive, by excluding ministers from both Houses of Congress. This is fatal to any reproduction of the English system. The American Cabinet is vitally unlike our own on this account. If Walpole had taken the line afterwards adopted at Philadelphia, ministerial responsibility would have borne a very different sense from that with which we are now so familiar, as almost to regard it as of divine ordinance. In no direction did Walpole give a more important turn to our affairs. He imparted a decisive bias at a highly critical moment; though the struggle was a long one, it is to Walpole more especially that we owe it that government in England is carried on, not by royal or imperial ministers, as in Prussia, nor by popular ministers, as in the United States, but by parliamentary ministers. In this view the reader will perhaps not regard it as an irrelevant digression, if we devote a page or two to recalling what government by parliamentary ministers is, and how it is worked.

The principal features of our system of Cabinet government to-day are four. The first is the doctrine of collective responsibility. Each Cabinet minister carries on the work of a particular department, and for that department he is individually answerable. When Pitt's administration came to an end in 1801, and Lord Loughborough was displaced from the woolsack, the ex-

responsible situations in office require their being members of it." In addition to this individual responsibility, each minister largely shares a collective responsibility with all other members of the government, for anything of high importance that is done in every other branch of the public business besides his own. The question whether the mistakes or misdeeds of one minister involves all the rest, is of course not quite independent of the position of the minister, or of the particular action. The censure and impeachment of Lord Melville, for example, was so purely personal in its bearings that it did not break up the government of Mr. Pitt. But as a general rule every important piece of departmental policy is taken to commit the entire Cabinet, and its members stand or fall together. The Chancellor of the Exchequer may be driven from office by a bad dispatch from the Foreign office, and an excellent Home Secretary may suffer for the blunders of a stupid Minister of War. The Cabinet is a unit—a unit as regards the sovereign, and a unit as regards the legislature. Its views are laid before the sovereign and before Parliament, as if they were the views of one man. It gives its advice as a single whole, both in the royal closet, and in the hereditary or the representative chamber. If that advice be not taken, provided the matter of it appear to be of proper importance, then the Cabinet,

immediately to the majority of the House of Commons, and ultimately to the electors whose will creates that majority. Responsibility to the Crown is slowly ceasing to be more than a constitutional fiction, though even as a fiction it possesses many practical conveniences. William IV, it is true, dismissed the Melbourne Government in 1834 of his own motion, and Sir Robert Peel stuck to the helm for his hundred days in spite of a hostile majority. But though such experiments may by bare possibility recur, they will hardly recur often, and they will never last long. The only real responsibility is to the House of Commons. Responsibility to the House of Lords means no more than that that House may temporarily resist bills of which it disapproves, until the sense of the electors of the House of Commons has been taken upon them. Even in Walpole's time, when the House of Lords passed a motion of censure upon the Spanish Convention in 1739, the minister paid no attention to it.¹

Third, the Cabinet is, except under uncommon, peculiar, and transitory circumstances, selected exclusively from one party. There have been coalitions of men of opposite parties, but in most cases, down to the present time, coalition has been only the preliminary of fusion. There have been conjunctions, again, of men openly holding directly opposite opinions on subjects

on the very principles that mark party differences. Lord Liverpool's Ministry, for instance, lasted for ten years, with so important an issue as Catholic emancipation left an open question. But notwithstanding both coalitions and open questions, it remains fully true that Cabinets are made from one

fourth, the Prime Minister is the keystone of the great arch. Although in Cabinet all its members sit on an equal footing, speak with equal voice, and on the rare occasions when a division is taken, are treated on the fraternal principle of one man, one vote, the head of the Cabinet is *primus inter pares*, and occupies a position which, so long as it lasts, is one of exceptional and peculiar authority. It is true that he is formally chosen by the Crown, but in practice the choice of the Crown is pretty strictly confined to the man who is designated by the acclamation of a party majority. If a party should chance to be divided or uncertain as to its leader, then undoubtedly, the favour of the Crown would suffice to turn the balance. There might be some objection in saying that the veto of the Crown on a Minister is virtually as dead as its veto on a bill; but the Crown could hardly exercise any real power of selection or exclusion against the marked leaders of the constituencies.

The Prime Minister, once appointed, chooses his own

cases it is for him alone to settle the number of posts. Constitutional respect for the Crown would inspire a natural regard for the personal wishes of the sovereign in recommendations to office, but royal predilections or prejudices will undoubtedly be less and less able to stand against the Prime Minister's strong view of the requirements of the public service.

The flexibility of the Cabinet system allows the Prime Minister in an emergency to take upon himself a power not inferior to that of a dictator, provided always that the House of Commons will stand by him. In ordinary circumstances he leaves the heads of departments to do their work in their own way. It is their duty freely and voluntarily to call him into council, on business of a certain order of importance. With the Foreign Secretary alone he is in close and continuous communication as to the business of his office. Foreign affairs must always be the matter of continuous thought in the mind of the Prime Minister. They are not continuously before the Cabinet; it has not therefore the same fulness of information as the Prime Minister; and consequently in this important department of public action, the Cabinet must for the most part, unless there be some special cause of excitement, depend upon the prudence and watchfulness of its head.

In case of differences arising between departments, it is to the Prime Minister that the appeal lies and the

ally never be refused to a Prime Minister with a
mentary majority, unless the sovereign were pre-
to take new advisers and face a dissolution.
h it is just conceivable that the sovereign might
strate successfully against the minister's request
colleague's dismissal, yet it is not likely that a
er would make a request of such moment without
ing to abide by it and to press it to the end.

important qualification of the Prime Minister's
exists in the case of the Crown. Here it is well
stood that the sovereign has a right to demand the
n of the Cabinet as a court of appeal against the
Minister or any other minister. It is now publicly
, for instance, that in the difficult foreign crisis of
1 dispatches were frequently referred back by
sovereign from the Foreign Secretary and the Prime
er to the Cabinet as a whole, and were there con-
modified in the sense desired. This is clearly
tical power left to the Crown, and if there chanced
a strong Cabinet, the use of such a power might
in a considerable reduction of the Prime Minis-
normal authority, and its transfer to the general
of his colleagues.

filling up the highest posts within a department,
s the headship of the permanent staff, the nomina-
an ambassador, or the appointment to the governor-

Commons, so is the Prime Minister the regular relations between the queen and her servants; the Cabinet stands between the sovereign and the government, so the Prime Minister stands between the sovereign and the Cabinet."¹ This does not mean that any Minister is out of immediate communication with the sovereign in matters strictly affecting his own department, in which the Crown may desire to be informed; but that outside of these matters it is the Prime Minister only who conveys to the sovereign the views of the Cabinet and its members and their political colleagues. Such attempts to intrigue with the sovereign against a colleague as were common with Sumner, Stanhope, Townshend, and Carteret, and as were afterwards repeated with particular baseness by Lord Loughborough, when he secretly warned George III. against Pitt's Catholic policy and advised him against the French Revolution, we may be very confident, never likely to recur.

Here this too long digression may end. It is not one of these four principles was accepted by Fox, or by anybody else in his time, with the authority or the fulness with which they are all acted on at present. They all coloured and shaped the form that popular government was putting on, and neither the joint solidarity of the Cabinet, nor its responsibility as the servant of Parliament, had

¹ Mr. Gladstone's *Speeches*, i. 236, etc.

present administration is the first that was ever yet
to be responsible for the whole government,
Secretary of State for one part of the kingdom
they are assured, acts counter to all their measures.”
When Carteret made his famous motion for Walpole’s
fall in 1741, Lord Wilmington, though he held the
Great Privy Seal, did not vote in Walpole’s defence
on the motion. The cardinal question of the position
of the Prime Minister was in a most singular stage, for
he was in practice able to invest himself with more
functions and powers of a Prime Minister than any
of his successors, and yet was compelled by the feeling of
the nation to earnestly and profusely to repudiate both the name
and every one of the pretensions that it involves.
The earliest instance in which I have found the head
of the government designated as the Premier is in a
letter from the Duke of Newcastle to the Duke of Cum-
berland in 1746, though in Johnson’s *Dictionary*, published
several years later, *premier* still only figures as an adjective.
“I had wished Pitt, then just made Paymaster, to
have obtained the parliamentary grant to the victor of Culloden.
He would be much better pleased,” writes the Duke of
Cumberland, “if the Premier moved it, both as a friend
and on account of his weight. I am fully convinced of
the Premier’s goodwill to me.”¹ On the other hand, in

made in the conception of this organ in government by comparing Walpole's professions before the of the century, with those of Mr. Pitt at the it. Pitt's view of the position of the Prime Minister was stated in the well-known letter of Lord Melville to Addington in 1803. Addington had absurdly suggested that Mr. Pitt should return to the government either as Secretary of State or Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Chatham was to be the head of the administration. As might have been expected, the man who had for nearly twenty years been at the head of the affairs in times of unexampled emergency, laughed at the proposal. He said satirically that he really had the curiosity to ask what office he was to fill. He desired Lord Melville, however, to explain his views to Addington. Mr. Pitt, wrote Lord Melville, expressed not less pointedly and decidedly his sentiments in regard to the absolute necessity there is in the conduct of the affairs of this country, that there should be a avowed and real minister, possessing the chief influence in the council, and the principal place in the confidence of the king. In that respect there can be no rivalry or division of power. That power must rest in the hands of the man generally called the First Minister, and that man ought, he thinks, to be the person at the head of the finances. He knows, to his own comfortable expe-

tion, it is noways incompatible with the most
concert and mutual exchange of advice and inter-
amongst the different branches of executive de-
ments; but still, if it should come unfortunately to
radical difference of opinion that no spirit of con-
on or concession can reconcile, the sentiments of
minister must be allowed and understood to prevail,
g the other members of administration to act as
may conceive themselves conscientiously called upon
under the circumstances." ¹

at Pitt here arrogates to the minister as his just
and demand, Walpole was obliged to thrust away
himself as a reproach and an offence against the
nation of the realm. When the great attack was
l upon him in 1741, Carteret expressly described
of his worst misdemeanours, that he had usurped
the power of directing all public affairs, and recom-
ing to all public posts, honours, and employments.
repeated as an article of charge against him in
speech, that he solely enjoyed and engrossed the
his sovereign. They called him a second Strafford,
excluded every man that disdained to be his slave
the pay and even from the smiles of the court.
andys, who led the attack in the Commons, declared
"According to our constitution we can have no sole
prime minister; we ought always to have several
ministers, or officers of state: every such officer

crime against the constitution. The attack was re in both Houses, but the minority in the Lords d a protest, and the opening clause in it runs thus are persuaded that a sole, or even a First Mini an officer unknown to the law of Britain, incon with the constitution of this country, and dest of liberty in any government whatsoever."

In Walpole's defence, neither he, nor any of who spoke for him, contradicted this principle only denied the allegations of fact. The Bishop o bury could find no proof that Walpole had usurp authority of First Minister. The Lord Chancell his apology for Walpole's interference in patron higher than that, as there happened to be a ver correspondence among his Majesty's ministers, app for places came to Walpole, not because he had of the king, but as the shortest way to the ear minister who had the place to give away. V himself paid little attention to this particular in his reply, but in deprecating it he took remarkable position, to which neither Mr. Pitt r of his successors would have assented. "I do r tend," he said, "to be a great master of foreign in that post it is not my business to meddle; one of his Majesty's council, I have only one Notwithstanding this disclaimer Walpole y

concluding this portion of my subject, it is proper to remark that it would be very misleading to take the arguments of any one period, whether 1889 or 1740 or any other date, as being definitely fixed parts of the constitution. To-day it is correct to say that the Cabinet is drawn to itself all, and more than all, of the royal power over legislation, as well as many of the most important legislative powers of Parliament. With due qualifications and allowances, it is not very far from the truth to add that the head of the Cabinet to-day corresponds in many particulars, alike in the source of his power and in the scope of his official jurisdiction, with the President of the United States,—though with the two very differently important and far-reaching distinctions, that the British Minister holds office for no fixed term, and that he always sits in the legislature. It is possible that in the next hundred years government by Cabinet will undergo changes of substance as important as the changes since the time of Sir Robert Walpole; but it is only of remark that the living statesman of widest experience and highest authority in the working of our constitutional system, has declared that in his judgment the Cabinet as a great organ of government has now reached its final shape, attributes, functions, and permanent position.

CHAPTER VIII

FISCAL POLICY

WHEN historians blame Walpole for not attempting reforms, they lose sight of a leading chapter in his policy: they omit his vigorous and fruitful efforts in the field of trade and commerce, which was then of far greater national importance than any merely political or parliamentary changes. His biographer is in the right when he complains that men have thought too exclusively of the minister's triple alliances, quadruple alliances, and foreign treaties; have made too much of the charges of ambition and corruption brought against him by unbridled faction; and have left those salutary regulations which ought to render the name of Walpole dear to every Englishman, to be principally confined to books of rates and taxes.¹ Walpole opened this chapter in what was, for the time, a remarkable proposition. In 1721 the king's speech contained a paragraph foreshadowing reforms compared with which bills for

is that nothing would more conduce to the ob-
g so public a good, than *to make the exportation of
n manufactures, and the importation of the commodities
a the manufacturing of them, as practicable and as easy
y be.*" Harley and Bolingbroke had made an in-
ual opening in the direction of free trade, in the
ve treaty of commerce with France at the time of
ht;¹ and to that extent Lord Beaconsfield was
ed in a favourite contention of his responsible days,
eace and free trade were the original property of
statesmen. But the royal speech of 1721 is the
ull, general, and distinct approach, so far as I
made by an English statesman towards those
tened views of trade which were fifty-five years
given in systematic shape to the world by the
of Adam Smith. Walpole was as good as his
he persuaded Parliament in the session of 1721
move duties on export from one hundred and six
s of British manufacture, and duties on import
thirty-eight articles of raw material.

ne years later (1730) he conferred a more indisput-
oon on the trade with Georgia and Carolina. The
w policy of those times restricted the colonies to an
ive intercourse with the mother country. Walpole
d an Act allowing the Carolina and Georgian
ers to export their rice direct to any port in Europe

northern Italy out of the markets of Europe. Shortly before his fall, he carried a measure for allowing the West Indian traders to export sugar direct to foreign countries, provided it were in British bottoms, without first landing it in British ports. The growth of colonial trade was one of the most striking facts of Walpole's time. A dozen years before he went to the Treasury the whole trade with the plantations about 1,300,000*l.*, both export and import - was only a few thousand pounds more under the head of export, and it was a third less in import, than that which was carried on with Jamaica alone, five and twenty years after Walpole left the Treasury. In the same interval, the total export trade from England with all the world had risen from six million pounds a year to more than twelve millions.¹

These were not mere hand-to-mouth expedients, but the outcome of enlightened and comprehensive views. Shortly after the failure of the excise scheme, which I shall have next to describe, a retired deputy-governor of Virginia came over to Walpole with a plan for an American tax. "No," said the minister, "I have old England set against me, and do you think I will have the new England likewise?" A few years later (1739) the temptation was renewed. Walpole again repelled it. His object had always been, he said, to encourage colonial commerce, because the greater the prosperity of

l it to be said that George Grenville lost America
se he was foolish enough to read the American
atches.

e most famous of all Walpole's projects in taxa-
in the sense of being that which made most noise,
he scheme for extending the excise. This gave his
es their first serious advantage over him, and in-
d on his power the first important check. In itself
ew policy of excise offered no striking or imposing
es. The most important element of it, the facility
arehousing imported goods for re-exportation free
y, had been in operation for many years in Holland.
d, it was the minister's object to narrow his design
n the smallest possible compass, and to present its
ty at the lowest. The bill actually introduced to
ouse of Commons (1733) was simply a proposal to
he customs duty on the importation of tobacco in-
excise duty on its consumption. Instead of paying
or giving bonds, on landing the tobacco from Mary-
or Virginia on the quays of London or Bristol, the
nant was to lodge his hogsheads in warehouses
e the control of excise officers; to pay duty only as
ok it out for home consumption; and if he took it
not for the home market, but for re-exportation
d, then he became free of all payments to the

allowances, and drawbacks, and the more prodigious rapacity of lightermen, watermen, and gangsmen, did not and boldly carried on at every port in the island. Second, the prevention of these frauds and the decrease of smuggling would be a gain to the honest traders. Third, accompanied as it was by a simplification of the law, this cheaper and easier collection would be such an advantage to the revenue as to enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to please the country gentlemen by taking a shilling off the land tax. Fourth, and much the most important of all, it would tend to make London the great port, and by consequence the market of the world.

It would be ridiculous in the light of modern science to waste a single line in vindicating the policy to which Walpole's Tobacco Bill was the opening. The author of the *Wealth of Nations*,¹ writing more than forty years later, had still to lament that none of Walpole's successors had dared to resume a project which his case factions, politicians, and smuggling merchants successfully resisted. Walpole knew beforehand the result of the thing of what he had to expect. But though Walpole was cautious and circumspect, he was no craven. He knew that his case was thoroughly sound, and was not having any transcendent opinion of human integrity. He had faith in the efficacy of plain reason addressed

¹ Bk. v. ch. ii.

men to epidemics of unreason, and he was now one of these epidemics sweep over them with a force that shook his power to its foundations.

The bare rumour of his politic design was followed by the fiercest popular outcry that Walpole or any other minister in our history ever encountered. The Opposition seized their chance, and eagerly seized it. A loud cry of alarm was raised from one end of the kingdom to the other. The writers of the *Craftsman* brought to light a project which was not yet before them, and they neither understood nor intended to understand all their powers of wit, misrepresentation, and malicious calumny. No assertion was too wild, no notion too incredible, no lie too glaring. Popular prejudice, passion, when once thoroughly excited, are never critical, and any charge was good enough to hurl at "that plan of arbitrary power, that plan, the excise." The proposal to put an excise duty on tobacco and wine became swollen into a general

Food, clothing, and all the other necessaries of life were to be loaded with a crushing tax. Every man's house would be invaded at every hour by the excise

Every man's goods and all his dealings would be exposed to minute and ceaseless inquisition. A great army of revenue officers would be created, who would overturn Magna Charta, undermine Parliament,

of my country decaying, and the people enslaved and oppressed. Pulteney, with more wit but no less extravagance, said the minister's fine undertaking put to the mind of Sir Epicure Mammon in the *Alchemist*, who was promised the philosopher's stone, by which he was to get mountains of gold and everything that he could desire, but all ended at last in some little thing for the itch.

There were few boroughs that did not dispatch directions to their members to oppose any new tax. The citizens of London, who might have been expected to resist the frenzy, were in as great a ferment as people in obscurer places. They sent a petition with the ordinary prayer that they might be heard by the king against the new tax, and it was brought by ten coaches in a train of coaches that reached all the way from Westminster to Temple Bar. The beadle and the singing officer went round every parish in the city, to stir up a mob to waylay members at the doors of Parliament. Even the soldiers took it into their heads that the king would raise the price of their tobacco, and were excited by their generals to be as ripe for mutiny as the country was for rebellion.

The House of Commons kept itself pretty quiet. After Walpole had explained and defended his measures, he held his men so well together, considering the vehemence

members went down at each of the successive stages of the measure, until at length the majority of sixty-one on the main question had on a subsidiary issue sunk to seven. From the opening of the session until the middle of April, Walpole stood out the storm. What might have seemed as important, though no effort was spared to meet them, the king and queen held as firm as a rock against him, the king and queen held as firm as a rock against him. Lord Stair sought an audience of the queen and assured her that Walpole was hated by the king as a peace-man, by the clergy as a Whig, by the people as a cause he only regarded the great moneyed company and he was hated by the Scotch because he showed that he hated them. Unluckily, Stair said something about his conscience. "Oh, my lord," said the queen, "don't talk to me of conscience; you will make me faint." She told him that his patriot strain would move her to nothing but laughter; that he only talked his politics and his professions from Bolingbroke and Carteret; and that he might, if he thought fit, show these lords that she had long known them to be two worthless men of parts as any in this country, and she had known them too, both by experience and report, to be two of the greatest liars and knaves in any country. Walpole expressed his readiness to resign at the very moment when either the king or the queen should say that such a step would ease their business in Parliament. The queen wondered how he could suppose her

times in his eyes, and with a vehement oath, "*I am a brave fellow ; he has more spirit than any man I ever*

The minister, however, was much too wise to suppose that the fidelity of the court was enough to support against the feeling of the country. He was not a Strafford nor a North. Nor was he constitutional enough to act as if the mere sanction of a majority of Parliament made a measure either expedient or safe. The night when his majority had fallen to seventeen he stood for some time after the House was up, leaning against the table with his hat pulled over his eyes, and a number of his friends hanging with melancholy faces round him. He assembled a dozen of them to supper at his house. "*This dance,*" he said, "*will no further* meant well, but in the present inflamed temper of the people, the Act could not be carried into execution without an armed force ; and there will be an end of the liberty of England if supplies are to be raised by the sword. If, therefore, the resolution is to proceed on the bill, I will instantly request the king's permission to resign, for I will not be the minister to enforce the law at the expense of blood."

Accordingly the next day, when the order for the second reading of one of the Tobacco Bills was called for, Walpole got up, and in a dexterous speech expressed his intention of postponing it for two months. The

men broke out into triumphant jubilation, and the spirits could not restrain the fierceness of their action. Every night of these debates the Court of Commons, through which members passed on their way from the House, had been crowded with an throng, who cheered and hooted honourable men as they were known to have supported or opposed the hated excise. On this last night, when they might have been expected to make them good-natured, they were more violent than before, greeting the supporter of the minister with "ironical thanks, hallooings, and all other insults which it was customary to put upon them without proceeding to blows." The minister's friends urged him to go out by another way, lest that his great bulk would make it hard for him to pass the gauntlet of the exasperated rioters without being trampled down. He persisted, however, and the night was so violent that but for the succour of Peel and others of his friends he would hardly have survived with his life.

The abandonment of the bill was the signal for boisterous and universal exultation that lasted for many days. The event was celebrated as if it had been a great victory over Frenchmen or Spaniards. Men went about with bayonettes in their hats, bearing the very foolish inscription, *Liberty, Property, and No Excise*. The Monument was illuminated. Bonfires were lighted, and the

and townsmen drank openly to the good health of Ormond, Bolingbroke, and King James the Third. The last note of the storm was heard more than twenty years later, when Johnson in his dictionary defined it as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by common judges of property, but by whimsical men hired by those to whom excise is paid."

Walpole did not shrink from making the weight of his resentment felt by some of those who held great offices under the Crown, and yet had ventured to thwart the minister of the Crown. As Lord Chesterfield was going up the great staircase at St. James's he was summoned by a messenger to the Duke of Grafton, who informed him of the king's command that he should surrender his office of staff as Lord Steward. Three other English peers were dismissed from their offices in the household, and Scotch peers shared the same fate. Even the holders of military commands were as sharply treated as civilians. As a rule, the king strove to retain the affairs of the government in his own hands. If Walpole asked for the smallest commission to oblige a member of Parliament, the king would say, "I won't do it; you understand nothing of the matter. I will order my army as I think fit; for your security of the House of Commons, you may do as you please; but you know I never interfere, or pretend to know anything of them; but this province I will keep to myself."

is sometimes blamed for these high-handed proceedings. He is accused of dismissing Chesterfield, for instance, because Chesterfield had shown the two intolerable qualities of talent and independence. Such censure is really idle. So far as the civil appointments at any rate are concerned, Walpole only acted on a principle which is now part of the accepted foundation of Cabinet government, and without which nobody would to-day either form a government or expect to be a member of a government. Chesterfield openly grumbled against the excise bills, and privately made his brothers vote against them. He was at the head of the little group of peers who had long wished Walpole ill in secret, and who with many meetings, whisperings, and consultations had persuaded themselves that the hour had come for striking at him.¹ It is true that the bills were dropped, but what minister would have gone on with a colleague who had helped to force him to drop them? It hardly followed that because Walpole abandoned the old practice of cutting off an opponent's head, therefore he was bound to keep him in a Cabinet. A weak minister like Pelham would have overlooked any amount of disloyalty, but a strong minister like Chatham or Chatham's son would have acted as Walpole acted. The great moralist, we may notice, was on the side of Thorough. Dr. Johnson always declared that if he

consenting in deference to popular opinion to a measure which he thought in principle to be right with the instinct of the debater, puts a crushing blow into Walpole's mouth ; for Macaulay, though he admitted the corn law to be against principle, had recently declared himself for maintaining the corn law, since the cause the constituencies were divided on the subject at least," Peel makes Walpole reply, " tried the measure which I thought right. I did not abandon it because success was proved to be hopeless and opposition universal. But you my accuser, when you are shrunk from even the proposal of what you think right. On your own showing you find public opinion unanimous against your measure, but equally divided as to its merits ; and yet, with all justice and all people on your side, you do that, without a word which you consider it disgraceful for me to have said after the battle and after defeat." ¹

There is no doubt that Walpole could have carried the excise through Parliament. Only four of the members deserted to the enemy, and most of those who abstained on minor divisions would have come out in support on the main question. But the great parliamentary leader knew when it was wise to look beyond the walls of Parliament. It was the difficulty of carrying

¹ Lord Stanhope's *Miscellanies* (1863), p. 80.

...but have passed it, but he could not carry it out
out tumult and disorder. This is in itself a good
r to the contention that he ought to have re-
l. No minister is bound to resign so long as he
ands a parliamentary majority, though it may well
dd that he is bound to resign or dissolve if he has
r to believe that the majority in Parliament does
represent the constituencies. Sir Robert Peel re-
d in the winter of 1845, because he believed that
peal of the duties on corn had become a pressing
ity, and because he foresaw that he would break
s party if he were to undertake the task. Wal-
circumstances in 1733 were quite different. He
that his fiscal policy was a wise policy, but it was
sense a national necessity. He knew that the
ry could be perfectly well governed without an
on tobacco, and that to insist on an excise in the
f strong popular opinion would be a piece of ex-
gly bad government. Finally, he knew that his
ation would be a grave mischief both to the king
o the country, because it would hand over the
interests to a motley band of ambitious men,
honest Tories, partly disloyal Jacobites, partly
tent Whigs, who had no common principles,
ad never shown any capacity for common action,
ho were now only united by common disappoint-
and malcontents.

tracted, was a decrease of the debt by little more than two and a half millions. Walpole professed to adopt the policy of the sinking fund, and he effected a reduction of interest from five to four per cent. His virtue, however, did not endure much longer, for by various minor alienations he boldly proposed in 1733 to take half a million from the sinking fund for the expenses of the year, and he boldly gave the true reasons for this startling attack upon his own provision. He told the House of Commons that if they would not let him have the money in this way, he should have to raise the land tax from one to two shillings in the pound, and he did not think it wise thus to increase the burdens that already lay so heavily enough on the landed interest. The sinking fund, "that sacred blessing and the nation's only resource," as some writers called it, was again and again increased in each subsequent year, so that by the end of 1749, after seventeen years of profound peace, the whole debt paid off was no more than £8,328,000, leaving a debt just short of £47,000,000.¹

If Walpole had been an extravagant minister, he had used for excessive expenditure the funds that he had so judiciously saved, and the next generation would have lightened the load on the next generation. His action would have been without excuse. But no minister was ever more thrifty of the national resources.

¹ See *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. iii.

was political, and in critical times fiscal maxims ways be rightly qualified and governed by political requirements. To bring the Hanoverian Government into favour with the landed men was, as has often been said, one of the cardinal points in Walpole's whole system, and in every part of it. But in laying hands on the sinking fund, or, in other words, in suspending the payment of debt, he was gratifying two other interests as well. He pleased the fundholders, who did not wish to have their money thrown on their hands when they had no other secure investments open. He pleased the general taxpayer, who is never unwilling to let his masters shift a burden forward on to the shoulders of future generations.

The same considerations of general policy explain Walpole's resistance in 1737 to a proposal made by Sir Robert Barnard for reducing the interest on the national debt to three per cent, and the compulsory redemption of annuities existing at a higher rate. At first Walpole wavered, and his final decision against the plan was evidently the result of close observation of public opinion, and calculation of the strength of the opposing interests. The whole number of persons affected by

country to personal convenience, admit that the debt might be viewed as a pillar of the Hanoverian government. The notion that the Pretender, if he came to his own again, would repudiate a debt contracted to keep him out of his own, obviously made even Walpole a zealous partisan of the existing establishment. It was in vain that Jacobites protested that the *Prophet's* vision of James with a flaming sword in the one hand and a sponge in the other, was a vile Whig conceit. The public creditor pinned his faith on Walpole. Walpole took care that he should have good reason for his faith. For many years the public confidence was as strong as that of George I., that Walpole could get gold from nothing, and anticipated the lament of economic writers that Walpole was the greatest commercial minister that this country has then ever seen.

¹ See Lord Stanhope's *History of England*, ch. xvi. p. 18.

CHAPTER IX

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

EN historians sometimes talk of the torpor of the clean era. Doubtless the era had none of the of Elizabeth, or Cromwell, or Chatham. Yet it is now that the bearers of two of the most illustrious in the literary history of the century came to in England the lamp of European illumination. They visited this country in 1726, and Montesquieu led him hither in 1732. It was Walpole's England inspired the *Philosophic Letters* and the *Spirit of*. The violence of faction, the froth of parliamentary n, the boisterous humours of elections, did not these brilliant and sincere observers from the of the matter. They felt the movement, the free-the full pulse and current of vitality, under an resting surface. The fact that Voltaire deemed worthy of attention under the head of govern-was equality of taxation. The contrast between nd and France was a poignant one to his humane ocial intelligence. "Here," he said, "the peasant ot his feet bruised by sabots, he eats white bread,

business in the city, while in France he was scorned any life outside the frivolous *saillies*. Though the government was in the an aristocratic oligarchy, the oligarchy was no Later economists believe that the earning labourer have not for many ages commanded a portion of subsistence as at this period of the century. Hallam, like Malthus, is of opinion respect of the real happiness of the common reign of George II might be advantageously with the more brilliant but less steady conditions times.¹

One of the grand articles against Walpole though he was at the head of affairs for years, not one great measure, not one important for better or worse marks the period of his rule. He ought, according to Whigs of our day, shortened the duration of Parliaments; yet all of the reforming Whigs of that and the next generation held that more frequent elections would be a mitigation of every parliamentary mischief. He have insisted on limiting the number of places excluding pensioners; yet when the innovators work in 1780 they judiciously sought for a remedy not in the exclusion of placemen, but the suppression of places. The patriots who had clamoured against

and making important changes, his critics ought
or what important change the time was ripe and
rtunity safe. A vast and important change had
de at the accession of the Hanoverian line. The
ct of a wise minister was not to make other
but to guard that. Some ministers are great
they pass great measures, others because they
repare or secure them. Walpole was a great
of the second of these two orders. Why should
out to him a measure which nobody applies to
testmen of his commanding position? Walpole
er a bad character and the younger Pitt has an
gly good one: so Walpole is condemned as
d unprincipled for not being a reformer and not
he dissenters, while Mr. Pitt stands undisturbed
destal, though he spoke against meddling with
Act, though he allowed parliamentary reform,
had taken up in opposition, to drop when he was
and though he solemnly abandoned Catholic
tion after as solemnly treating it as a con-
a great international compact. In saying this,
judging Pitt, but offering a standard by which
udge Walpole.

al tranquillity was a condition of material ad
Under the appearance of forget, men were
their business, and preparing the ways and

of devout sentiment than Law ; workers of more able and laborious life than Watts, Lardner, and Arden, who all of them sacrificed preferment to con-

The dissenters, it is true, still laboured under disabilities. The Acts against occasional conformity and restraint of the rights of dissenters to education had been repealed in 1719 (*ante*, p. 109). The motion for the repeal of the Test Act was introduced in 1736 by Walpole's advice. As the dissenters were peaceful and law-abiding, and gave him no trouble, he would run no risk for their sake, and the Sacheverell explosion had taught him how sharp and severe the risk might be. All this is true enough, but it would have been little less than madness in any statesman for a generation at least, to forget for a day the lessons of the Sacheverell explosion. That extraordinary break had led to the Tory Government of the last years of Queen Anne, and—to use again a phrase of expression that I have borrowed before—nothing less than one of the greatest miracle in our history prevented the Tory Government of the last four years of Anne from either in a legitimist restoration or a civil war. Any statesman who had seen the constitution coming to ruin as that to disaster, might well think it better

¹ See Mr. Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 384.

dissenters should continue for some time longer to endure harsh laws, than that new provocation to the Church should bring back the old peril to the State.

Three years later the dissenters again approached Walpole, urging the repeal of the Test Act. He gave them the reply, so well known from all ministers to all reformers, that he quite agreed with them, but that the time was not opportune. One of the deputation hardily asked him when the time would come. "If you want a specific answer," said Walpole, "I will give it you in a single word--Never." But reparation was made by the Indemnity Act, first passed in the first year of George II, and renewed every year afterwards, with three or four interruptions, down to 1828, when the sacramental test disappeared. The test remained, to please the pride of Churchmen, but if a dissenter chose to break it with certain not unimportant limitations, he could evade the penalty. The struggle against occasional conformity had been inspired, not merely by dislike of religious toleration, but by the solid political object of closing to dissenters the corporations which returned members of Parliament. Walpole's policy as to tests secured the practical victory, while leaving the obnoxious flag of church privilege still flying. Lord Chancellor Cowper informed George I. on his accession that, if the clergy could be brought round, all differences

clamorous as to force him to propose a sixpenny duty on every barrel of ale brewed in Great Britain. The proposal took fire. All the dialectic ingenuity of the nation was invoked against the obnoxious sixpence. The substitution of the duty on malt to a duty on beer was considered a violation of the Act of Union: now the violation of any article of a compact is a legal dissolution of the compact; therefore the Union was dissolved. But the dissolution of the Union revived the Scottish Act of Independence. Therefore King George was no longer entitled to the Scottish allegiance, and the next in succession of the Stuart line became King of Scotland. This train of argument was decorated with references to the separation of Denmark from Sweden, to the rejection of the Spanish yoke by the United Provinces, and to the rejection of the yoke of Israel from Judah. The Scots had resisted the usurpations of Charles II and James VII: should they now resist the tyrannical minister who had put chains upon his king and his country?

Violent tumults broke out in Glasgow and other towns. The troops were called in, and there was a considerable loss of life. The Edinburgh brewers entered into a solemn compact that they would rather die than pay the duty. The government held firm, and proceedings were instituted against the brewers for refusal of the duty on stock in hand. They were

They first to discuss the question, *Should or not*. The chairman began to take the votes on his hand; but the right-hand man thought it hard him to have to speak first, and the left-hand man thought the same, and nobody would be the first to . At length one man plucked up courage to vote and by noon the next day, says Walpole, forty houses were hard at work in Edinburgh and ten in Leith. This satisfactory result was due to firmness and judgment of Lord Islay. The Duke of Roxburgh, then Secretary of State for Scotland and Lord of Cartaret, had secretly encouraged resistance representations that the days of Walpole's power were numbered. The minister sent prompt remonstrances to the king, and Roxburgh was compelled to .

The circumstances of the Porteous riot are familiar wherever the English tongue is spoken, because they made the dramatic opening of one of his finest plays by that admirable genius who, like Shakespeare in his plays, has conveyed to plain men more of the spirit of the past in noble fiction, than they would find in most professed chronicles of fact. The early years of the *Heart of Midlothian* are an accurate account of the transaction which gave so much trouble to Queen Anne and the minister. A smuggler who had excited popular imagination by his daring and his chivalry

discovered, fierce throngs suddenly gathered to nightfall to the beat of drum, broke into the street, dragged out the unhappy Porteous, and sternly put him on a dyer's pole close by the common place of execution.

Carteret thought that these wild doings were good material for a parliamentary attack (1737). If the government did nothing, he could denounce the neglect of difference to law and order. If they took sharp measures, he knew that it would kindle the resentment of the Scotch. In either case, moreover, he would weaken the authority of Lord Islay, to whom the ministry had entrusted the management of Scotch affairs. This course proved quite correct. Walpole was bound to support Lord Islay, as well as his brother the Duke of Argyll, who dreaded lest the affair should become national. Lord Provost of Edinburgh and four bailies were summoned to the bar of the House of Lords, and it soon became evident that so far as feeling in Scotland was concerned, the affair was already national in its full extent. The testimony showed that ninety-nine Scotchmen out of every hundred thought that Porteous had been justly condemned, and justly put to death. Islay's influence with Walpole that any attempt to inflict excessive punishment for Porteous's murder, would make the government in Scotland disaffected and would render the gov-

brought in for disqualifying the Provost of Edinburgh for all magisterial office in Great Britain ; inflicting on him a term of imprisonment ; abolishing the Town Guard of the city ; and removing the gates of the Nether Bow Port. This stringent bill passed the House of Lords by a majority of fifty-four to twenty-two. On reaching the Commons it immediately encountered very rude treatment. The forty-five Scottish members, regarding the bill as an insult to their nation, were against it to a man. The Tories professed to be opposed on principle to all bills of pains and penalties. Things began to look as if the bill would be flung out, and all Walpole's tact was required to prevent a parliamentary disaster. After a heated conflict the imprisonment of the Provost was dropped, and so were the clauses for disbanding the Town Guard and demolishing the town gate. In their stead a provision was inserted, imposing a fine of two thousand pounds on the Corporation for the benefit of Porteous's widow. The generality of mankind, says Hervey, looking on these great transactions in cold blood, were not a little amused at Parliament spending five months in declaring that a man should never again be a magistrate who had never wished to be one, and in raising two thousand pounds on the city of Edinburgh, to make the widow of Captain Porteous with unconjugal joy bless the hour in which her husband was hanged.

men in the Highlands; the disaffected districts thus be drained; the pride of the chiefs gratified by the bestowal of his Majesty's coronation robes; and active military life would please the martial spirit of the clansmen. Walpole saw what was to be done, and approved generally of the scheme.¹ Two considerations of different degrees of weight made him so. One was the clamour, always very loud, and particularly likely to rise to its stormiest pitch, against a standing army. The other and stronger was the intense national sentiment of Scotland, vividly shown in the recent affair of Porteous, and the certainty that the levy of a large Highland regiment in the order of the government, would undoubtedly be represented as a design on the national freedom. On these grounds, we hold that Walpole was right in his policy towards the Highlands alone. What was easy for Pitt, and the fear of the Stuarts had practically come to an end after the spirit of partisanship and intrigue had been banished from the Highlands, even if it was not actually in Walpole's time, would without dispute be extremely dangerous.

The resentment of Scotland could not make itself felt before the arrival of a general election, which was four years off. Meanwhile Walpole was sud-

¹ *The Challenger, History, &c.*

dangerous he had yet known. It arose from the rage of the Prince of Wales, and was destined to in the fulness of time a disastrous effect on the times of Walpole. Prince Frederick, like his grandfather George IV, is a striking instance of the common and notable contrast in courts between important position and paltry character. By placing himself at the head of the able band in opposition, he took the sting out of Walpole's standing charge, that the coalition was essentially Jacobite; and the adhesion of the heir to the throne marked a signal change in the position of Poyne, Wyndham, Carteret, and their friends. The prince was vain, childish, and truthless. In 1745, when news arrived that the Highland rebels had reached Derby, and that his brother had marched northward to meet them, he was found playing at blindman's buff with the pages. He had a passion for disguising himself in running off to bull-baits at Hockley-in-the-Hole. He was incontinent of speech, heedless of all correspondence between words and things, and while overflowing with conceit, was destitute of self-respect. This was the trial out of which Bolingbroke designed to make his Patriot King.

The prince, on his marriage, found his allowance of 10,000*l.* not enough for his new establishment. It was moreover, intensely galling to him to feel that

ear, with the sinister counsel that he should
irksome situation to an end by boldly laying
before Parliament. If Parliament could be in-
request the king to settle 100,000*l.* a year on the
with a jointure on the princess, then he would
gained three grand objects: he would have a
proper income, secured his own emancipation, and
vexed his father. The news that the prince had
with this suggestion, exasperated the court beyond
trol. The queen a hundred times a day cursed the
which her eldest son had been born, and a hundred
a day she and the Princess Caroline wished
might drop down dead of an apoplexy. The
fires did not burn any the less furiously
apprehension that the prince might carry P
with him. Lists made out by his own friends
him a majority of forty, and even the ministers
could not bring it lower than ten. Walpole took
alarm. He saw that the moderate people, on
always relied, felt the injustice of leaving the
without a jointure, and the prince a pensioner at
on the king. Accordingly, with much difficulty
suaded the king to send his son a message, pro-
jointure and a settled allowance of 50,000*l.*
the risk he ran, in the inflamed state of mind
royal masters of rousing the shadow of a suspi-

utmost duty for the royal person, and of his sense of the royal goodness and graciousness ; but that the affair was now out of his hands, and he could give no answer.

The king was more enraged than ever, and roughly reproached Walpole for subjecting him to such a repulse. Walpole answered that the good he expected from the proceeding was to be reaped to-morrow, not to-day ; and that what he had proposed by it was to bring the House of Commons to reason, not the Prince of Wales. When Pulteney brought on the motion for an address begging the king to settle 100,000*l.* a year on the heir-apparent, Walpole replied in a speech of singular firmness and address. After a long debate, the motion was lost by a handsome majority of thirty against it. It was commonly supposed to have cost the court a great deal of money in bribing members of Parliament, and the king, though delighted with the result, grumbled at the amount. Yet it appears that the cost, after all, did not exceed 900*l.*, in two sums of 500*l.* and 400*l.* respectively, to two gentlemen who were to have received the money at the end of the session in any case, and who only took advantage of this particular occasion to exact prompt payment. This is the one definite case of direct parliamentary bribery in Walpole's history.

"If over any man in any cause," said Walpole afterwards, "fought dagger out of sheath, I did so in the

serious illness, and to people in the lively and expectancy that is natural to all oppositions, that he might disappear any day. Bolingbroke pressed his amazement at Walpole's imprudence, but truth Walpole knew very well what he was about, and acted on the maxims which had been the key to his success. He had recognised what was just to the prince's demand. By conceding it he had satisfied his opponents in the wrong. He averted the present difficulty with the king, without regard to the contingency of future difficulties with the prince. We hear of the mischief of a system which made ministers responsible to the public opinion of the day; it is well to remember the embarrassments and difficulties that beset great ministers from the private passions of a court.

The miscarriage of the project that was to have secured such fine things for him, made it all the more necessary for the prince to have to live under the same roof with his detested parents at Hampton Court or at St. James's. He attended drawingrooms and levées, and dined at the court in public; but the queen, though she invited him to take her hand, never spoke to him, and pretended to be wholly unconscious of his presence. The prince suddenly brought things to a violent end. One night (1737), while the royal family

of about. She was hurried into a chaise and driven on at the risk of her life at full gallop to St. James's, where in less than an hour after her arrival, the unfortunate lady was delivered. The queen was roused at one in the morning with the news of the flight; she instantly dressed, ordered coaches, hurried after the singular fugitives, and by four found herself at St. James's at the bedside of her daughter-in-law. The king's fury at his son's escapade knew no bounds. Scoundrel and puppy, knave and fool, liar and coward, were on his lips at every moment. It was all Walpole's fault, for forcing his master to settle 50,000*l.* a year on the ingrate, and so make him independent for life.

Walpole took the royal storm with his usual composure. At the same time he knew very well that the feud between the king and the prince was also a struggle between himself and the Opposition. The prince was nothing without Carteret and Pulteney, Bolingbroke and Chesterfield. Some of his own colleagues, too, were less intrepid than himself. They were less disposed than he was to burn their boats, to cut off all hopes of future honour and emolument, and Lord Hardwicke especially remonstrated against the asperity of the message by which the king turned his son out of doors. This only made Walpole more determined to hold to his own course against prince, opposition, and trimming colleagues. The Chancellor, the Duke

There was even an ignominious squabble as to the furniture which he had a right to carry with him. The foreign ministers were informed that it would be impossible to the king if they abstained from visiting the prince. A written message was even sent to the peeresses, and privy councillors, that if they were not in the prince's court they would be excluded from the king's presence. The prince was not to wait many days for his revenge. As we shall see, when the critical moment arrived, he became the principal agent in the deposition of his minister, and driving Walpole from power.

The heaviest blow in Walpole's ministerial career followed these vexatious events. In the winter of 1737 Queen Caroline died. From an excess of delicacy, remarkable in one of her strong characters, and which can be accounted for by the peculiar nature of her marriage with her husband, she concealed from her physicians the infirmity with which she had for some years been afflicted. They pursued an erroneous course of treatment, and when they discovered her secret it was too late. She met her end with serenity and resignation. One unnatural antipathy burnt fiercely to the exclusion of the clergy made her profess forgiveness of her enemies, but to the last she refused to see him. The king was incessantly about her bedside, sometimes blubbing and maudlin, sometimes bullying and peevish.

queen, "*cela n'empêche pas.*" When Walpole arrived the king took him to the bedside. The queen said: "My good Sir Robert, you see me in a very indifferent situation. I have nothing to say to you, but to recommend the king, and my children, and the kingdom to your care."

The change in Walpole's position was profound, and everybody was sensible of it and acted upon it. "Though he may have more power with the king than any other body," said the shrewd Chesterfield, "yet he will never have that kind of power which he had by her means, and he will never dare to mention many things to the king, which he would without difficulty have brought about by her means."¹ Newcastle and the Chancellor were even emboldened to talk to the king on their own account. The difficulty of managing the House of Commons was increased by the rise in the demands of his followers of the baser sort, in proportion to his greater need for them. The resentment of the heir to the throne for the affronts that Walpole had put upon him, became keener as he saw a nearer chance of gratifying it. All this only brings into stronger relief the bluff courage with which Walpole, now left standing absolutely alone, confronted the fury of Opposition, the selfishness of colleagues, and the sudden humours of the king.

CHAPTER X

FOREIGN POLICY

IT is a misfortune for the popularity of reputation that the most important chapter of policy should have become in its details the least interesting. Even the vivid genius of Carlyle could not breathe life again the European diplomacy of the eighteenth century. Congresses without issue, campaigns without visible objective, open treaties, secret articles, alliances, private combinations, the destruction of the web laboriously woven yesterday, the union of powers against one, of three against two, and every possible variety of permutation and combination make a vast chaos in comparison with which the porturbed Europe of to-day is a scene of staid order. Towards the close of Walpole's rule many of the issues for Great Britain and for mankind are blurred on the horizon of continental struggles in and the field. Until that time Walpole's principle was to hold England back from strife.

keeping the land tax low. War was an interruption of that energetic devotion to trade and manufacture which was so remarkable a sign of the time, and which was every year adding enormously to the wealth and strength of the country. In case of war our enemy would assuredly launch the Pretender and rouse the Jacobites, if not in England, at any rate in Scotland. War, in fine, would certainly at an earlier or later stage come to be associated in the public mind with the Hanoverian connection, and the burdens of war would become so many arguments against the dynasty. For all these cogent reasons, peace has never been so imperative an object to Great Britain as it was for the generation after Utrecht.

Townshend advanced a certain way in the path of non-intervention, but not on principle or system. To Walpole belongs the chief credit of perceiving that the time had come for altering the foreign policy of his party. The Whigs had supported King William in his vast schemes of continental alliances and campaigns. Year after year they had placed all the resources of England at the disposal of Marlborough. They had denounced and resisted the Peace of Utrecht, and with every circumstance of passion and animosity had impeached its authors. With Walpole new maxims definitely arose within the Whig party. Principles of peace, of neutrality, of diplom-

how it was opposed by Burke and the Rockingham Whigs—the representatives of Walpole's policy—more lofty phrases and a deeper morality—how it explained the quarrels between Shelburne and Fox, and the younger Pitt, who so long looked on him as a Whig, acted mainly on Walpolean maxims, until the French Revolution flung them over under the stress of the French Revolution and compelled Pitt to do the same.

At the beginning of this great change in the policy of his party, neither Walpole nor any other minister had carried it forward to a logical end. Absolute non-intervention was impracticable. The king's Hanoverian dominions involved us in Germany, as well as in the politics of both Russia and Sweden in the north. The contest of Gibraltar involved us for many years with Spain. Commerce with Spanish dependencies was the most extensive branch of British trade. The emperor's edicts were expressly directed against our commercial interests. Finally, we were still under the general obligation of the Treaty of Utrecht. British interests in European affairs were therefore direct, active, and substantial.

On the other side, in estimating the state of the continent the minister saw the continent distracted by intrigues and counterplots of ambitious and unscrupulous states at Vienna and Madrid. He saw Russia beginning to use her new ascendancy in the north against

of decisive prominence. Hardly a pretence of public right guarded the state system of Europe. What Queen Caroline wittily observed of the Triple Alliance of 1735 was equally true of the other combinations of the age. It always put her in mind, she said, of the South Sea scheme; people went into it knowing that it was all a cheat, still hoping to get something out of it; everybody meaning when he had made his own fortune to be the first in scrambling away, and each thinking himself sharp enough to be able to leave his fellow-adventurers in the lurch.

When George I. in 1723 requested Walpole to provide funds for operations against the Czar in his attempt to depose the king of Sweden, the minister found the money, but hoped that it might never be wanted. "*My politics,*" he said, "*are to keep free from all engagements as long as we possibly can.*" Engagements were inevitable. No wide and comprehensive settlement of Europe was possible. For us no standing system of foreign policy was possible. It was an epoch of transition; too late to found a European policy on religion, too early to found it on nationality; the dynastic struggle which had raged for so many years was coming to an end; the struggle for trade and the new world was beginning. It was no time for ambitious general views, and Walpole was not the man to bewilder himself either by fictitious contingencies or by any of

dreams of the universal mediator and peacemaker men had hoped to realise first in the papacy, and in the holy Roman empire, and which was in the second of these august institutions so terribly carrying. Walpole was a man not of ideals, but of expedients, as the commander of an army in a campaign is a man of expedients. He looked at each crisis as it arose, from the point of the actual, positive, direct particular interests of England; and the one view that he permitted himself was the wise and the one that England's best interest lay in European peace.

The only hope for European peace lay in an alliance between England and France. Circumstances at that time made these two powers the mediators and makers of Europe. The policy of Wolsey, of Elizabeth when she acted with Henry IV, of Cromwell when he acted with Mazarin, was reproduced by Walpole in his alliance with Cardinal Fleury. Walpole probably did not very well know, and certainly did not at first know, what had been done by Wolsey, Elizabeth, or Cromwell, but he renewed their tradition, and by union with France from his first entry into real power down to the Treaty of Vienna in 1731, he secured for Europe intervals of peace in a period of extraordinary conflict and danger. The co-operation with Fleury was always equally close, its aspect varied with the

history of Europe.¹ Here again Walpole departed from the old tradition of his own party. It was enough to make King William's Whigs turn in their grave, that the influence of George I. should have procured a cardinal's hat for a prime minister of France; that the British ambassador should be concerting military plans at Versailles with Marshal Berwick, the son of King James; and that a serious proposal should come to King George to allow his eldest daughter to turn Catholic and marry Louis XV.

Between 1725 and 1731 the positions of Spain and the Empire underwent incessant change. The congress of Cambrai had long been sitting under the auspices of Great Britain and France as mediators, to compose the differences arising out of their rivalry. Europe was suddenly informed that the rivals had composed their own differences and made the Treaty of Vienna (1725). The emperor, Spain, and Russia drew themselves up in line against the rest of Europe. England's direct concern lay in certain secret articles that were alleged to exist, by which Spain was to be supported in attacking Gibraltar, the emperor to be supported in the Ostend Company and his other maritime and commercial designs, and the Pretender to be supported by the Empire, Spain, and Russia. The immediate retort to the Treaty of Vienna was the Treaty of Hanover (September 1725)

England to the German emperor, and to expose the electorate for the sake of England. himself, though he defended the Treaty of Hanover, doubted whether Townshend's apprehensions were not exaggerated, and, looking to the question which it was his characteristic habit to look, he doubted whether the House of Commons would willingly consent to the subsidies. The dispatch of a squadron to the Mediterranean convinced Russia that the new allies were in earnest, and it arrested mischief in the north. In the summer of 1741, when he opened the siege of Gibraltar, the emperor's forces were scattered, Prussia fell away from the alliance, Hanover, and a general conflagration became inevitable. Only the prudence of Walpole and the good faith of the allies prevented it. A British expedition was sent to the West Indies, but the admiral had instructions to keep on the defensive. The allies were ready to fight against the Spanish attack, but Walpole in the end delayed, and begged them to wait. We may wonder even in our own enlightened day, how a minister could dare to be so sensible as Walpole. His this resolute tardiness in recourse to arms exposed him to taunts of pusillanimity then and since, he was justified by the event. Within a few months the emperor, finding himself without any of the outside support which he had reckoned, withdrew from his engagements with Spain, the Treaty of Vienna fell to pieces,

commercial rights were restored which had been invaded by the Treaty of Vienna in 1725. Gibraltar was not mentioned. The charter of the Ostend Company was to be suspended. Spain was to be allowed under guarantees to introduce a force into Tuscany and Parma, as a security that the succession in these two provinces should revert to Don Carlos. The Treaty of Seville thus made a useful peace in one quarter, but, so complex and intricate was the game, it was a provocation to war in another. It left the emperor isolated and resentful, disappointed alike in his dynastic schemes and his imperial claims. Walpole, who was now free by the resignation of Townshend to pursue his own views, immediately addressed himself to Vienna. Without consulting Fleury, he proposed to the emperor to guarantee the succession of his daughter to the hereditary dominions of the House of Hapsburg in return for the abolition of the Ostend Company, and for the imperial assent to the entry of the Spanish troops into Parma. The emperor, to whom the succession of Maria Theresa had long been the main object of his life, came in to these terms, and after some difficulties in connection with the electorate of Hanover had been boldly thrust aside by Walpole for future arrangement, his grand plan was finally accepted in the second Treaty of Vienna in 1731. The European explosion was once more postponed.

pole's method at its best. His ends were diplomatic management was penetrating and his union of tact and patience with immutability is a standing lesson in political action. After the death of the king of Poland a violent contest instantly began for the choice of a successor. France supported Stanislaus, the father of the French king's consort, already once the wearer of the unequalled crown. The emperor favoured Augustus, the son of Saxony, and son of the late king. Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Spain joined France. Stanislaus suddenly appeared in the midst of the turbulent nation and was hailed king by acclamation; Russia at once sent an armed force into Warsaw. Stanislaus took the crown and the partisans of Augustus elected him king. France, Spain, and Sardinia immediately declared against the emperor as instigator of the Russian invasion. By the beginning of 1734 Spain had made herself mistress of his possessions in southern Italy, Russia had gained little avail, and in his straits he addressed an appeal to England. The success of the French against the emperor had raised wider issues than the difference between a French and an Austrian monarch on the Polish throne. Was Great Britain to see her ancient ally beaten and stripped by England's enemies, French and Spanish Bourbons? Was

follow, if the war went on and the emperor were left to his fate? George II answered questions of this kind by vehement declarations in favour of succouring the emperor. He was a German and hated the French. As elector of Hanover he was part and member of the Empire, and bound to its head. His martial passion always flamed out at the prospect of war. The emperor offered his vanity an almost irresistible temptation by actually proposing to place him in command of the imperial army on the Rhine.

The queen's German sympathies drew her towards the same views. Most of the Cabinet were with the king. Newcastle used as big words as his master about driving the Spaniards out of Italy and humbling the pride of France. Lord Grantham reiterated his policy in the simple creed, "I hate the French, and I hope as we shall beat the French."¹ Lord Harrington, the Secretary of State in whose department the most important part of the negotiation was officially conducted, leaned strongly for war. The Opposition raised the familiar cry for national honour and fidelity to our allies. The emperor sent envoy after envoy to intrigue for Walpole's overthrow. Fleury, with a council of state full of marshals, had difficulties of his own, and he more than once betrayed the British minister by shifts, tricks, evasions, and downright lying. Walpole for a long time stood entirely alone. He held out no

this distance of time it is impossible for a political reader not to follow them with some of the lively interest that is commonly reserved for our own affairs.

He read all the despatches that arrived or were sent; he carried on an unwearied private correspondence of his own with his brother and other agents at the continental courts; and he personally directed the whole of a long course of negotiations, as intricate and as delicate as any European statesman ever meddled with. It is important to remark that though Walpole was firmly decided that not an Englishman should be killed either to support Augustus in Poland, or to recover the Italian possessions of the House of Austria, he was too much alive to the immense difficulty of keeping England out of the war if it should continue, not to strain every nerve for the pacification of Europe. First, he contrived gradually to secure from the court an unwilling acquiescence in his endeavours, before departing from our own neutrality, to bring about a general peace. Nowhere was caution more necessary. "Step by step," he said, "I can carry the king and queen perhaps the road I wish, but if I ever show them at a distance to what end that road leads, they stop short." Second, he laboured in the Cabinet, just as he was accustomed to do in Parliament, by reasoning, persuasion, and steady com-

poles arbitrary and dictatorial methods, powerful as he was, he never would let his own opinion, in matters of State, prevail against the majority of them." ¹

The third and most exacting part of his task, besides holding back his own court and directing his own Cabinet, was to put such equal pressure now on the emperor, now on the cardinal, now on the court of Spain, as would force them to an adjustment. The emperor was bent on recovering his footing in Italy; the queen of Spain, on securing Naples for Don Carlos, and his duchies for his brothers; France coveted aggrandisement on her eastern frontier at the expense of the Empire. The emperor was stubborn, proud, and dull. Fleury was naturally disposed to peace, but his hand was forced by colleagues with designs on Germany, and he was not without the duplicity of weakness. The queen of Spain was a fury. The pensionary of the United Provinces was a martyr to the gout, was rough, peevish, and unmanageable; and the other Dutch leaders were all suspicious and distracted. Such were the personages with whom the British minister had to deal.

As usual, Walpole approached his difficulties step by step. The two maritime powers, Great Britain and Holland, held the key of the position. Any hope of assistance from them would harden the haughty and warlike temper of Vienna. On this side it was necessary

Versailles the next, and at the Hague every day.

After this exercise of delicate pressure on the Emperor, a second leading object was to divide Spain between France and England. Each was in constant alarm lest the other should come to an accommodation with Vienna. The English policy caused France to be assured that if she refused to make peace, a marriage would be agreed upon between an Austrian archduchess and one of the Spanish Infants, to the detriment and isolation of the interests of France. Spain, on the other hand, was discreetly informed of the existence of secret communications between France and Vienna. The scene is not particularly edifying to those who hope that politics are a branch of morality. Walpole's part, at any rate, was upright and consistent. He was no Machiavellian, engaged in a match of fraud and craft, but an honest statesman striving at once for the best interests both of France and her country and her neighbours. Instead of making France a party to a war in which she had not a share, he made her the umpire and pacifier of Europe. In concert with Holland he submitted to the Emperor a plan of accommodation at the three courts. It contained no advantage to France, and so people were not at it. Bolingbroke, however, shrewdly observed that Walpole was no fool, and there must be more in it than yet appeared. So it proved, for Walpole had dis-

France once more repressed an outbreak. After some months of further negotiation a general pacification was arranged. The Spanish Bourbon was installed in Naples and Sicily; the Saxon elector was recognised as King of Poland; Tuscany, on the death of the reigning grand duke, was to go to Francis of Lorraine, the destined husband of Maria Theresa; Lorraine on this event (which happened very conveniently in 1737) was to belong to Stanislaus for life, and then to be ceded to France. Our generation has seen the overthrow of this settlement—has seen the Bourbons expelled from Naples and Sicily, the Austrians from Tuscany, and the French from Lorraine: we do not need to be told how much future trouble to the world was involved in the various arrangements of 1735-38. Walpole's defence for the cession of Lorraine—that it was a province of which France had taken and kept possession in every war in which she had been engaged—was unsatisfactory, but it may be counted a sufficiently good defence for the times. To modern sentiment there is something deeply repugnant in this insolent transfer of whole populations, with no more regard to race, to tradition, or to their own wishes, than if they were flocks and herds in a cattle-market. The idea of a federal and independent Italy was not altogether unknown. But to attempt to found a foreign policy on nationality in the first half of the eighteenth

Walpole for once got perhaps even more credit than he deserved. Carteret declared that he always regarded Walpole the luckiest dog that ever meddled with the affairs of England. Pulteney said it was a most fortunate accident for England, and whoever had the honour of it, he thought England had the benefit of it. Bolingbroke perhaps was right if the English ministers had a hand in the peace; but if they had more sense than he thought they had; and if they had no hand in it, then they had much better leave it to them than they deserved.

We now come to the most critical affair in Walpole's career. Having successfully steered through all the political emergencies for so many years, in 1738 he encountered a storm in his own country, which all his address and persistency were powerless to quell, and which finally brought his power to destruction. The origin of the Spanish war of 1739 would furnish a long story, but the character of that war is described in a single sentence. It was, like the greater war of Pitt fifteen years later, what Adam Smith calls a colony quarrel,¹ and its object was to prevent the search of the colony ships for a contraband trade with the Spanish main. Under the Treaty of Utrecht a single British ship was allowed to trade with Spanish America. The annual ship was the colourable shelter of an extensive illicit trade.

¹ *Wealth of Nations*, bk. iv. ch. 7.

pretence of refitting and provisioning, other ships carried on smuggling operations wherever they could run a boat ashore. That all this was illegal, that Spain was warranted in search and capture, that occasionally these rights were harshly exercised in distant seas and under proconsuls too far off to be under control by the Government at Madrid, and that this harshness was often provoked by the daring of the English traders, are all facts which a few years after the war had broken out nobody could be found seriously to deny. Burke says that it was his fortune to converse with many of Walpole's enemies, who stirred up the clamour against Spain as successfully as Burke himself in after years stirred up the clamour against France. "None of them," he says, "no, not one, did in the least defend the measure, or attempt to justify their conduct, which they as freely condemned as they would have done in commenting on any proceeding in history in which they were totally unconcerned." ¹

For the moment no justification was necessary. The merchants set the nation on fire with the tale of atrocities on the Spanish main. Gentlemen read letters to the House of Commons about seventy of our brave sailors lying in chains in Spanish dungeons. "Our countrymen in chains!" cried a city alderman in his place in Parliament, "and slaves to Spaniards! Is not

how, seven years before, his ship had been boarded by Spanish *guarda-costa*, and his ear had been bitten off, with the taunt that he had better carry his king. On being asked what he thought when he found himself in such ill plight, Jenkins replied with a phrase which became the cry of the hour, "I commend my soul to my God and my cause to my country." The neat balance of the sentence has not the ring of the seafarer; but the literary prompter, whoever he may have been, knew his business. When the cause suffers itself to be swept by such stories as this, it ceases to be rigorous as to evidence and proof; the probability of exaggeration and invention made no difference in the effect. Recital of cruelty is the surest way of rousing the passionate indignation of Englishmen. They are not incapable of cruel deeds themselves, and some deplorable episodes in Ireland and the East and West Indies have shown. But to their honour be said that their sensibilities are readily touched when, as in the present case, to humanity was sacrificed both national pride and commercial ambition, that to the alderman's phrase, it was indeed idle to talk of forms and words, even though forms and words came to mean policy, legality, and international right.

Walpole agreed with the rest of the public that the conduct of the Spanish governors and captains de

for the past and security for the future could be obtained by peaceable means. He knew that the fresh activity of the guardships in Spanish America was connected with Spanish objects in Europe, and he had satisfied himself that these objects could be more surely handled by diplomacy here than by buccaneers there. He insisted that war with the nation with whom our trade was greatest, would do us more harm than anything to be gained from it would do us good. He warned Parliament that France would certainly join Spain, and that, for various reasons, neither the emperor, nor Holland, nor Sweden would assist us. By these arguments he gained time, and a preliminary convention was made with Spain. Plenipotentiaries were to meet at Madrid to regulate the future relations of the two countries in respect of trade and navigation, and the various other questions in dispute. With unmeasured heat the Opposition denounced the convention, and echoed the passionate cry of the nation for war. Walpole declared that war would be unjust, impolitic, and dishonourable. He carried the House of Commons with him by a slender majority of eight and twenty, but public opinion went every day farther away from peace. The pith of the English demand was abolition of the right of search, and right of search was what Spain would not concede, and after nine years of war still did not concede. Appeal to national pride proved to be a

Then why did not Walpole resign? He had declared the war to be unjust, impolitic, and dishonourable; he had predicted disaster and confusion as its result; he was surrounded by colleagues who did not share his views, and who thwarted, embarrassed, and injured him; neither court nor people went with him, and he was so conscious of the weakness of his position that he did actually and repeatedly press his resignation upon the king. Why did he not persist in it? He was bound to refuse to have part or lot in a war which he believed, and had declared, to be unjust and dishonourable; it is wholly impossible to deny. This was the case of the excise over again. There the public had a boon which he had gratuitously devised for them, and proposed to them; the country would be no worse after its rejection than it was before; the boon might be proffered again on another day. But to lend his aid to an unjust and unnecessary war, was worse than if he had deliberately aided and abetted the Southern scheme after denouncing it as fraught with ruin and disaster.

The case against Walpole is too clear to deserve comment, but we are curious for explanation. It is always safe to suppose the lowest motives to govern the truest, even in politics. Those who find the explanation of Walpole's character in his thirst for power at any

there should be war; ¹ he would have been safer if he had flung himself, as Pitt, Pulteney, and the rest flung themselves, headlong into the current of public passion. But if Walpole was, as we hold, a sound statesman, with clear vision and genuine public spirit, it is necessary to seek some other account of what was not only, on his own showing, connivance at a crime, but was a gross miscalculation. As Bolingbroke said, Walpole was no fool. Considerations of real weight must have been present in his mind. We must remember, to begin with, that he had passed his whole life in surmounting difficulties, and bringing bad situations to good ends. He had not liked the Treaty of Hanover much better than he liked the Spanish war, yet he had turned it to good account. So with many other transactions in which he had been engaged. "I never heard," he said about this time, in a sentence which explains one great source of his strength, "*I never heard that it is a crime to hope for the best.*" He undoubtedly hoped that by remaining in office he would there be best able to seize the first opportunity, or if not the first, then the second or the third, of finding for the war, mistaken as it was, a speedy and a safe issue. His adversaries were fully alive to this. One of their strongest charges against him was that he had no intention of making war in good earnest, and that he would cheat his own country by bringing the war to

so swiftly proved, that his opponents, as they stood, were incapable of forming a strong government of conducting a war with vigour or making a treaty with skill, and that not one of them was comparable to himself in experience, knowledge, or ability, either as a negotiator or administrator. Pitt as yet was a disclaimer, Carteret was a marvel of temerity and rashness, and Pulteney, as we shall presently see, had no nerve nor judgment for a crisis. Walpole might be excused for asking himself whether it could be his duty to leave the fate of his country to men who had shown themselves so recklessly unscrupulous and imprincipled, and who were destined, as he foresaw, to show themselves so profoundly incompetent. If he may, without any baseness, have felt some special allegiance towards the king, which within the limits of the law we regard as a virtue when shown towards friends and colleagues in a party. The king's appeal, "Will you desert me in my greatest difficulties?" was not one which after so many years of service Walpole could list with indifference. That he should have made himself an accomplice in an unjust and mischievous foreign policy in order to help George II, was like Mr. Pitt's abandonment of the Catholic claim at the risk of a civil war to please King George's grandson. None of these actions, however, stand good before the tribunal of history.

after another poured troops into her provinces, and set about the dismemberment of Austria. Walpole urged a pacification between Maria Theresa and Frederick of Prussia, as the first step towards a union of Germany against the designs of France. But his counsels no longer commanded attention either at home or abroad, and in the great changes wrought by Frederick on the European stage, he did not survive to play a part. When Walpole fell, as Ranke truly says, "it was not the fall of an ordinary minister, but the fall of the political system based upon the first union of the house of Hanover with the Regent of France. It was a return to the policy then abandoned of war against France and the Bourbon interest in Europe, and that at a moment when these once more had the upper hand both by land and sea."¹ He had brought the parliamentary constitution safely through its perils, though it was destined to new perils at a later epoch from the vigorous and obstinate reaction under George III; and the close of the constitutional movement at home left the way open for Pitt to conduct new enterprises abroad.

¹ Ranke's *History of England*, v. 405.

CHAPTER XI

WALPOLE'S FALL.

THOSE who can recall the state of public feeling the coalition Government of Lord Aberdeen at the close of the Crimean War, will be able to realise the intensity and exasperation provoked by Walpole towards the Government of Lord Aberdeen. The general sentiment could not then organise itself with the extraordinary velocity and concentrated force—a velocity and a force not without precedent in their own—to which we are so accustomed in the present day. But the great career which was opened up by the genius and character of Pitt a few years later, demonstrated that even then it was possible for the popular passion and enthusiasm to shake and to overthrow both court and Parliament. Walpole had placed himself in a completely false position, in which he could find neither guide nor check, neither satisfy nor regulate his judgment, propensities, passions of the day, or the orders and interests of the country. The nation was weary and temper were thoroughly roused. People were become profoundly fatigued with twenty years of government, and it seems as if nothing were so hard for a nation to submit to as a long course of mere prudence. That spirit which its admirers call enterprise, adventure, and ene-

Louis XIV brought to his dynastic interests. The war with Spain was a war for trade, for exclusive markets, for the mines of Peru and Potosi. It was a war for plunder. With such a mood in full blast, Walpole could not grapple. Burke put his finger upon the fatal spot when he said that Walpole, while professing to share the sentiments of his adversaries, opposed their practical inferences, and that this for a political commander is the choice of a weak post.¹ No observation could be more true, and the more popular the system of government, the truer is the application. To temporise, to manage, to find intermediate positions, to play a fine game, is in popular governments unintelligible and impracticable. The England of the Hanoverian kings was popular enough for this maxim to apply with all its force in moments of agitation, as Walpole found out.

The Duke of Newcastle saw his chance, and to Walpole's other embarrassments was now added personal dissension in the Cabinet. The duke flung himself eagerly into the designs of the war party. Lord Hardwicke, the Chancellor, always took sides with the duke. Wilmington, who had never forgotten his own miserable failure in 1727, thought that the opportunity of being first minister was again returning to him, as indeed it was. There were, in short, not more than three members of the Cabinet on whom Walpole could securely

could not abate the duke's peevishness and rest. Violent altercations took place every day. "I give nothing," said Walpole on one of these occasions, "I give in to everything, am said to do everything, answer for everything, and yet, God knows, I do what I think right. I am of opinion for more ships of Sir Chaloner Ogle's squadron before I dare not, and I will not make any alteration on the archbishop pacifically proposed postponement of the question, but Walpole refused. "Let them go," said Walpole. "let them go." A struggle took place on a vote in the Cabinet. In 1740 Walpole wished to name Hervey Privy Seal. The duke, to prevent the appointment, asked Carteret whether he would take it. In the Cabinet he suggested that it should be offered to Carteret. Walpole said he was not sure that it would be accepted. The duke replied that he would answer for that. "Oh," cried Walpole, "I always suspected you had been dabbling there, and now I know it. If you make such bargains, I don't think myself bound to keep them." Hervey had the office, and within a few months, when Walpole's hour of danger came, he turned his back upon him.¹ In his memoirs Walpole described a scene between the two ministers at the close of a long meeting of the Cabinet, which deserves to be transcribed ---

“Just as Sir Robert Walpole was upon his legs to go away, the Duke of Newcastle said, ‘If you please, I would speak one word to you before you go’; to which Sir Robert Walpole replied, ‘I do not please, my lord; but if you will, you must.’—‘Sir, I shall not trouble you long.’—‘Well, my lord, that’s something; but I had rather not be troubled at all. Won’t it keep cold till to-morrow?’—‘Perhaps not, sir.’—‘Well, come then, let’s have it’; upon which they retired to a corner of the room, where his Grace whispered very softly, and Sir Robert answered nothing but aloud, and said nothing aloud but every now and then, ‘Pooh! Pshaw! O Lord! O Lord! pray be quiet. My God, can’t you see it is over?’”¹

The leaders of the Opposition had in 1739 taken the unwise step of seceding from the House, as an expression of their disgust at the ruin which the minister was bringing on the country. The House of Commons is the worst place in the world for *coups-de-théâtre*. Their secession, like that of Fox and his friends, was a great mistake, and when they perceived the difficulties that were thickening round their redoubtable opponent they hurried back. The Parliament had now approached its last session, and both sides had their attention fixed on the general election. It was with a view of bringing on the topics of their whole case against the minister, that the Opposition in the beginning of 1741

of Lords. Their topics were common. In affairs the great article of charge was that he had abandoned our old and natural ally, the Emperor of Austria, and raised up our inveterate enemy, the King of Bourbon. In domestic affairs he had fraudulently mismanaged the South Sea settlement, had refused to reduce the national debt, and had swollen the national treasure on Spithead expeditions and Hyde Park manoeuvres while his unconstitutional conduct had been a standing army of unnecessary numbers, costly and useless squadrons, parliamentary corruption, the creation of new and useless offices, a swollen civil list, hesitation, and the dismissal of officers for voting against an excise scheme. These acts of profligate and maladministration were due to one who had arrogated to himself a place of French extraction, that of sole ruler contrary to the nature and principles of the British constitution. Even, however, if no oversight, no crime were supposed in his public conduct, still the government "too long possession of power is dangerous." It was not necessary to prove him guilty of any crimes; as things stood, the mere dissatisfaction of the people and their suspicion of his conduct

¹ Richelieu first assumed the quality of prime minister was for long as odious in France as it became a centre of attack in England. See *Œuvres du Cardinal de Retz*, i. 281 (ed. 1871).

king.

The motion had no sooner been made than it was proposed that Walpole should withdraw, on the strength of a well-known practice of the House, that a member against whom an accusation has been brought should retire while his conduct is being inquired into. Both this, however, and the hardly less absurd amendment that he should be heard in his own defence and then withdraw, were dismissed. After a long and vehement discussion, in which Pulteney and Pitt were most conspicuous in the attack, Walpole wound up the debate in a speech which, so far as we can judge from the condensed report, was marked by an animation, comprehensiveness, and dignity worthy of a great minister defending a long and powerful government of the affairs of a great nation.¹

He vindicated his foreign policy and his financial administration; taunted his enemies for reproaching government with pusillanimity if they did not interfere in foreign affairs, and with Quixotism if they did; asked how he could answer charges that were not specific, and were substantiated by nothing more tangible than common fame and public notoriety; insisted that if he had governed by means of corrupt and profligate expenditure, then King, Lords, and Commons for twenty years must all have been his dupes or accomplices, which

when the war broke out; and, finally, came to with a warm denial of charges of gratifying ambition, usurping sole authority, grasping at emoluments or grants for himself, or placing those connected with him in posts of responsibility or trust for which they were unfit.

It is no esoteric secret confined to the precincts of Parliament, that a taunt, or a personality, or an appeal to any peculiar combination of parties, often goes further for purposes of debate than either lofty declaration or weighty reasoning. Walpole opened his speech with what was the most apt and vital part of it, a violent assault upon the composition of the assailing body. "The Jacobites," he said, "distress the government they vainly seek to subvert; the Tories contend for party pre-eminence and power; the Patriots, impatient for office, clamour for change of measures, but mean only change of masters. "A patriot, sir! why, patriots spring up like mushrooms! I could raise fifty of them within ten and twenty hours. I have raised many of them last night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable and insolent demand, and up starts a patriot."

The coalition which Walpole denounced, did not hold together until the division. The movement had been ill concerted. It was devised by some of the malcontents of the Whigs, without consulting the Tories. Not a

certainly hard to reconcile with their general conduct on other occasions.

The motion was thrown out by 290 against 106 in the Commons, and 108 against 59 in the Lords. It was noticed that 500 members were present at the height of the debate, so that more than a hundred must have gone away without voting. The majority was crushing so far as it went, but the Opposition had been able to state their view of the issue before the constituencies and their owners. As a Jacobite well said, *it marked Walpole out to the nation*. The advantage of concentrating attention on a single personality, whether that attention be friendly or hostile, is a cardinal maxim among the mysteries of electioneering. That Walpole felt himself and his policy in deeper and more perilous waters than he had ever to face before, is certain. This was the time when his son drew that melancholy picture of him, almost the only melancholy one there is—

“He who was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, for I have frequently known him snore ere they had drawn his curtains, now never sleeps above an hour without waking; and he, who at dinner always forgot he was minister, and was more gay and thoughtless than all his company, now sits without speaking, and with his eyes fixed for an hour together.”

It has even been contended, incredible as it may seem,

over, and Lord Beaumont is surely at the right
censures Coxe for omitting all mention of the de
from which the mystery arises, though Coxe mu
had it in his hands. The story is this. Among W
papers was found a letter from James, dated from
in July 1739, and endorsed in Walpole's own w
being an original letter, as having been addres
given in Rome to Carte, the Jacobite historian
afterwards delivered to himself by Carte in Sep
The letter is a reply from James to some messag
mitted to him by Carte from an important pe
England, to the effect that this person wished
James and his cause, and had it in his power t
both. The message would seem to have asked for
assurances that the King, if restored to the thron
protect the Church of England and inflict no ve
on the Hanoverian princes. These assurances
was, of course, perfectly ready to give, but he c
distrusted the authenticity of the message. "Th
you bring," he says to Carte, "could not but
very singular and extraordinary to me, beca
deliver it only from second-hand, and that I have
of your being authorised by the person in question, v
not but feel that it is natural for me to mistrus
may come from him."¹ Carte, we must re
though a strong and an honest Jacobite, wa
regular political agent by profession; he was a

felt it impossible to believe that a man of this stamp was likely to be chosen by Walpole as the bearer of so delicate and dangerous a communication.

If the letter had not borne Walpole's own endorsement, nobody would believe that it was he to whom James referred. Everybody would then have taken it for granted that it was an intercepted letter, and that the reference was to one of the malcontent Whigs in opposition. As it is, two important facts are to be observed. The author of the message, whoever he was, did not communicate his good wishes towards the Pretender direct to Carte, but to some third person. We are asked to assume, therefore, that Walpole, one of the wiliest of men, actually told somebody else to tell Carte that he wished well to the Pretender, and had his interest at heart. Next, Carte was unable to satisfy James that he had any authority to bring the message at all. In other words, these views, so absolutely irreconcilable with every act and utterance of his life, so profoundly important, so extremely dangerous, must have been thrown out by Walpole fortuitously, gratuitously, aimlessly, and without authority to anybody to convey them to the only man from whom he could expect any return for these momentous confidences. The only document that we have, therefore, cannot reasonably be taken as good evidence for so startling a statement as that Walpole

Carto gave Walpole James's letter to convince him that grave designs were afoot, and that it was time for the minister to recognise Jacobite power and influence. The other explanation is that in conversation with Carto's informant, Walpole may have in general terms admitted the possibility, in the event of a war and all the difficulties and complications of war, of a strong reaction setting in against the House of Hanover; he may further have intimated the apprehension, which for that matter had never for twenty years been absent from his mind, and was the basis of his whole policy, that if the Pretender would make declarations in favour of the Church and against vindictive retaliation, he might have a chance of restoration to the throne of his ancestors. This was mere matter of opinion on the facts. The Jacobite plotter was the most credulous being in existence, and it is easy to conceive that language of this kind, filtered through several channels, may have emboldened Carto to give James a message, in whose significance even the Pretender himself, as his words show, did not for a moment believe. This is the explanation of the mysterious paper, which seems to us to have fewest difficulties. No explanation can have so many as that which assumes that Walpole entered into a dangerous intrigue for the bare chance of two or three votes. This is the most incredible of all, not merely because the intrigue would

blo in Scotland, where the affair of Captain Porteous
not been forgiven. Then, as now, Scotland was
t unanimous, and only six out of the forty-five
ers were for the court. The twenty-one boroughs
rnwall, under Lord Falmouth and other patrons,
d almost as unfavourable. The Cornish Tories had
a vigorous attack in the election of 1734, but had
ignominiously. They succeeded in 1741, partly
se the Falmouth influence had gone over to them,
partly because the Prince of Wales now actively
ened, and his power, as Duke of Cornwall, of
ing dormant or disputable rights, was too danger-
be left out of account by these small corporations.
the time came, it was the Scottish vote and the
sh vote that destroyed the minister. Walpole's
pt to divide the coalition between the malcontent
s, the Tories, and the Jacobites, which had been
sful in the House, failed in the country; and the
beheld the curious sight of all the influence of the
nder being thrown into the same scale with all the
nce of the heir to the throne.

hen the new Parliament met, Walpole's friends
anguine enough to look for a majority of forty,
they calculated that a good majority, like a good
f money, tends to make itself bigger. In our time
ould know to a man, on the morrow of a general

On the address Pulteney made a grand attack, to which Walpole replied, as his party thought, with as much health, spirits, force, and command as ever. He showed that he meant to fight every inch. He flung aside the charge that he was answerable for all the public troubles. Was it he who had raised war in Germany, or advised war with Spain, or killed either the Emperor Charles or the King of Prussia, or been the adviser of Frederick or of the King of Poland, or kindled the war between Muscovy and Sweden? He had brought about not one of these critical events; but if they meant to turn him out, the sooner he knew it the better; and if any man would move for a day to examine the state of the nation, he would second it. Chesterfield, he said, was right in telling the Lords that this was a time for truth, for plain truth, for English truth.

The unresting sea itself is less inconstant than are the moods of the House of Commons. After their chief's defiant speech, ministerialists had flocked home to their suppers in brilliant spirits; but when the serious work of deciding election petitions began on the following afternoon, they were promptly awakened to the dangers in front of them. Disputed returns were then decided, not as now by a judicial tribunal, nor as in an interval between then and now by select committees, but by the whole House, and without a pretence of

possibility. The next trial of strength was the election of the chairman of committees. Excitement was raised to the keenest pitch, for there was an uncertain band whose votes would depend on their instinct for a majority, or who, if they could not trust their instinct, would abstain. In either case the issue was doubtful. Two great party dinners were held at two taverns, and after dining at six o'clock, the House met in that tumult of hope, fear, expectancy, confidence, indecision which on such high occasions quickens the pulse of the dullest and the coolest. The lobbies were crowded, for four hundred and eighty members out of a gross total of five hundred and fifty-eight voted.

The tellers at last, amid breathless suspense, announced the numbers. Walpole's nominee was beaten by a majority of four. Pulteney and his men raised a great shout, loud, fierce, and long,—the exultant rebound after twenty years of unbroken defeat. For twenty years they had been fortified by the accession of one man of genius after another; for twenty years they had exhausted the resources of wit, passion, and power in debate; they had practised every manœuvre in the art of parliamentary tactics; they had divided only once in a session, and they had harassed the foe with divisions; they had taunted him with parsimony, and reviled him for profusion; they had held him up to

baffled that they had actually marched away in the sullenness of defeat and despair, leaving their adversary smiling, composed, unhurt, the master of the field. And now at last the spell was broken. They suddenly held their enemy at bay. They had no right to the stern joy of victors in a great public cause, but we cannot wonder that their exultation was the most boisterous that had ever been heard within the walls of Saint Stephen's Chapel, or that some of the wilder among them even reminded one another that *forty-one* was a date of ill omen for tyrant ministers,—it was just a hundred years since patriots had brought the guilty Strafford to the block.

The division lists began to fluctuate. For a few days after the first defeat, the minister had small majorities. Government won by seven, by twenty-four, by twenty-one, then they lost by four, by one,—so nice was the balance. On the important question of the Westminster petition, their men were thrown out by a majority again of four. There was no baseness to which men did not stoop. A young Irish peer was brought in for Winchilsea by the court. His competitor, though he had only a single vote at the election, presented a petition. The sitting member made a heroic speech, then went across to the Opposition, and promised if they would withdraw the Winchilsea petition, he would support them on the

Robert held to his post, and made speeches at four o'clock in the morning as strong and as full of spirit as his speeches had ever been. His sons hoped that as soon as he had gained success enough for honour, and made the majority secure, he would be induced to quit the scene and end his career with some years of repose. But the veteran only laughed over the supper-table, and declared that he was younger than any of them.

The Christmas holidays arrived before the struggle was over, and were busily spent in urging the consciences and interests of wavering members. Spirit ran so high both indoors and outside, that not even the neediest member dared to offer his vote in return for a place, a pension, or cash down. There were over forty of them on whom neither side could count. Some of them gave first a vote for Opposition, then a vote for ministers, and the third time no vote at all; and then the order of their conscientious rotation began afresh. Horace Walpole had not long been back from Rome, where they had been electing a pope; the intrigues among members of Parliament reminded him of nothing so much as the dealings of the cardinals in the sacred conclave. Such was the desperate tenacity of the minister, that he actually wrung from the king permission to send an envoy informally to offer the Prince of Wales to raise his annual allowance from fifty to one hundred thou-

to the charge with a motion for a secret committee of twenty-one to inquire into the state of affairs, to search persons and papers, and to give the king their advice. Thunder rattled from every oratorical battery. Speeches were made on both sides, including, besides Walpole and Pulteney, Pitt, Henry Fox, George Grenville, and Yonge. Yonge was the minister of whom Walpole said that nothing but such a character could keep together such parts, and nothing but such parts support such a character. When the debate was over Pulteney, who has been said, always sat on the Treasury bench in admiration to Sir Robert, "Well, nobody can do what you can." "Yes," replied Walpole, "You can do better." "No," Pulteney answered, "it was not of that weight with what you said." The whigs had been vigorous. With the ardour that in a parliamentary crisis knows no bounds, they had dragged men from their beds, and brought up lame, halt, and blind. The king's eldest son, as auditor of the exchequer, had been so indiscreet as to communicate with the House of Commons. He was sheltering two or three invalids there, upon which a question should be put. The patriots stuffed the keyhole with dirt and sand, and the door could not be opened in time for the division. When the division was taken the members who voted made up 503, the greatest number that had ever been in the House, and the

division on the merits by sixteen. While the last division was being taken, Walpole, who knew what was going to happen, beckoned one of the members whose seat was concerned, to come over and sit on the bench by his side. "Young man," he said, "I will tell you the history of all your friends as they come in, one by one. Such an one, I saved his brother from being hanged; such another, from starving; such another, I advanced both his sons." It was not in Walpole's nature to take reverses at a tragic pitch—that fatal defect in political affairs. He was free from all the cheap irony with which overstrained idealists find consolation for their own misreadings of human nature; and the experience that "we men are but a little breed," neither soured nor embittered him. No statesman in history, not even Cavour after the crash of Villafranca, ever faced defeat more as a man should. This was the moment when Lord Morton wrote to Forbes: "Last week there passed a scene between Sir Robert and me by ourselves, that affected me more than anything I ever met with in my life. He has been sore hurt by flatterers, but has a great and an undaunted spirit, and a tranquillity something more than human."¹ Potter, the Archbishop of Canter-

¹ *Coltuden Papers*, 175, 11th February 1742. See also 5th January 1741-42.

having been long persecuted by his foes, at last vanquished them, and the reason was *quia se non deseruit*. Walpole was as good as the man in Thuanus. His nerve never gave way, but as he informed the Duke of Devonshire, then in Ireland, "the panic was so great among what I should call my own friends, that they all declared my retiring was become absolutely necessary, as the only means to carry on the public business."

Between the two divisions on the Chippenham petition, Walpole had made up his mind that all must be over. Subterranean communications were carried on with some of the old Whig leaders, and stipulations were made that Walpole should be screened from all extreme proceedings. The younger Whigs, with Pitt at their head, strove to make their own peace with the court by promising more liberal securities for the minister than Pulteney was ready to do. They even undertook to answer for the Prince of Wales. Walpole always rated these aspirants at what was then their true political value, and declined the offer. That the offer should have been made, and on its rejection should have been followed by unmeasured onslaughts on the minister whom they had proposed to screen, is a good test of the sincerity of all their heroic censures. When the arrangements with Pulteney were at last got into a fair train, Walpole sought an audience at St. James's. The king, who had so bravely supported him against the violence

place, Walpole walked away for the last time out of that famous chamber, where for forty years he had laboured so assiduously for the national good, which had witnessed so many of his triumphs, which had been the scene of so long and undaunted a struggle against the most formidable enemies, and for which finally he had acquired new prerogatives and an immovable supremacy in the constitution of the kingdom.

The conflict began on the first of December in 1741. The House adjourned on the third of February, and on the ninth Walpole was created Earl of Orford. Besides this elevation it was arranged that he should receive a pension of four thousand pounds a year; the pension fell through until 1744, when Walpole was driven by his embarrassed circumstances to ask Pelham to obtain it for him—a reasonable favour which that plausible personage, who owed all to Walpole, granted with the worst possible grace. The minister's first wife had died in 1737. Then he married Mary Skerrett, with whom he had lived for several years, and who only enjoyed her new station for a few months. The child of this irregular union was now, as part of the royal recognition of her father's services, raised to the rank of an earl's daughter, and kissed hands, amid some gibes, as Lady Mary Walpole.

The drama did not end with Walpole's resignation.

dictated on the eve of battle (1742). Early that morning they were prepared, their tactics were not settled, and Pulteney, their leader, suddenly showed himself to be hopelessly bewildered and impotent. The country had taken the declamations of faction for the language of sincere belief and honest intention, and the popular expectations were boundless as they were distracted. There was a great cry for justice on the minister, and people were indignant at the criminal's audacity in daring to drive openly in the public streets. Others declared that they were not for blood, but that what the nation wanted was a good place bill, a pension bill, and triennial Parliaments. Some were for the reduction of the civil list, for life appointments, for abolishing regular troops. Others conceived the happily combined idea of doing away with all taxes, and carrying on the war with more vigour than ever. This wild babel of 1742 was the first example of the nemesis that awaits an Opposition that has been profligate in its promises. The bitterness of the disappointment was all in favour of the Jacobites, because it made people despair of any redress of their grievances from Parliament, and turned their minds towards a restoration. We are familiar with this particular effect of unreasonable expectations in France in our own day. This was always the Walpolean issue: a parliamentary commonwealth, or a legitimist restoration.

The one man who had a practical policy was the fallen

meant by saying that Walpole's whole theoretical system was by the instrument of party connection was, and is, the secret of rule by Parliament. He had quitted Downing Street, but it was his private address that still directed the contest. Pulteney all looked as the head of the new government, without scruple that he had once declared that he would not take emolument or office, accepted a seat in the House, but declined a department. No statesman had made such an exhibition of infirmity as that of Walpole in 1742. He told Lord Shelburne some years afterwards that there was no comprehending or describing the confusion that prevailed; that he lost his head, and was obliged to go out of town for three or four days to recover his senses.¹ Yet it was not courage in the ordinary sense that failed him. It was rather, as a contemporary observer said, a sense of shame that made him reluctant at turning courtier, after having acted patriotically and with so much applause. He was shamed, however, by the stipulations into which he had entered before Walpole's retirement; the feeling among the courtiers and in the country was too strong for them to be known, or to appear to act on them; and he felt that he had no alternative but to stand firm on his ground until the first fierceness of the storm was over. When that had gone, he found that his own

ment on a Broad Bottom, in which they should have their share. Bolingbroke hurried over from his meditations on the sweets of retirement and the blessings of exile, to share the day of glory with the men whose plans he had inspired. The clever plotter found that it was he who had been duped. The malcontent Whigs had no intention of dividing the spoil. The result of this discrepancy was in a few weeks a complete split between the two main sections of the old Opposition, the extinction of Pulteney in a peerage, and the maintenance of all Walpole's principal colleagues in office. Lord Wilmington was in name the head of the government, Newcastle, Hardwicke, Polham, Yonge, all remained, and the only change of real importance was the admission of Carteret to be Secretary of State with the direction of foreign affairs.

The next question after the division of places was the punishment of the minister. There was much wild talk of impeachment, and articles were even prepared. But very little reflection showed that no crimes had yet been brought home to the impenitent criminal, and that there was nothing firmer to stand on than the hollow topics of parliamentary invective. Then they fell back upon a bill of pains and penalties, until they remembered that though such a bill might pass the House of Commons, it would certainly be thrown out by the Lords and might

no doubt done what he could to make certain of his own security from the old-fashioned vengeance on fallen ministers. All ended in the appointment of a secret committee of the House of Commons to examine into the last ten years of Walpole's administration. This body was finally composed of twenty-one members, only two of whom were friendly to the incriminated man. They set to work with all the zeal of party and personal hatred, summoned agents, and ransacked papers. The papers disclosed nothing. Scrope, secretary of the Treasury, who knew more Treasury secrets than anybody else, would tell them nothing. He said he was fourscore years old, and did not care whether the last few months he had to live were spent in the Tower or not; the last thing he would do should be to betray the king, and next to him the Earl of Orford.

Walpole meanwhile only laughed at the secret committee. He laughed at a truly iniquitous bill which was brought in to aid the baffled committee, by giving an indemnity to anybody who would make discoveries as to the disposition of offices, or any payment or agreement in respect thereof, or concerning other matters belonging to the conduct of Robert Earl of Orford. The Lords threw out this odious project. Of the proceedings of the secret committee enough has been said on a previous page (122). As a grand exposure of the fallen minister, it was gener-

friends kept faith in a star which had been so long in the ascendant. His house was more crowded than it had ever been. One night in the summer (1742) his son took him to Ranelagh. "It was pretty full," says Horace, "and all its fulness flocked round us; we walked with a train at our heels like two chairmen going to fight, but they were extremely civil and did not crowd him or say the least impertinence." When he went to the levée, his former master could not conceal his delight at seeing again the friend and author of so many good counsels, and the new ministers were in an agony lest the king should call him into the closet. They all, however, kept that fair countenance which often among political men hides such dismal emotions. They came and spoke to him, and he had a long and jovial talk with Chesterfield. Nobody seemed to bear anybody else malice. The Duke of Newcastle gave his colleagues a dinner one Sunday at Claremont; the servants got drunk and the coachman tumbled off the box on the way back. They were not far from Richmond, and the innkeeper told them that perhaps Lord Orford would lend them his coachman. So Walpole's coachman drove Pulteney, Carteret, and Limerick home. Carteret at a levée came up to thank him, the Duke of Newcastle standing by. "Oh, my lord," said Walpole, "whenever the duke is near overturning you, you have nothing to do but to

making him a duke, and straightway putting him back at the Treasury. They saw all in distraction : no union in the court ; no certainty about the House of Commons ; Lord Carteret making no friends, the king making enemies, Mr. Pelham in vain courting Pitt, Pulteney unresolved.¹ The common story that Walpole now retired to his plantations and his pictures in Norfolk, conveys a false impression. He was in fact only a degree less important and less closely attentive to every turn of affairs, both at home and abroad, than if he had still been in office. Pelham and others of his colleagues went to visit him, and constantly corresponded with him. Wilmington died in 1743, and after a struggle with Carteret, Pelham, acting at every step under the direct advice of Walpole, secured the first post in the government. His mentor from Houghton, adhering to his own cardinal maxim, warned him in characteristic language to confine his colleagues to one party,—"Whig it with all opponents that will parley, but 'ware 'Tory." Nor can we doubt that the other maxim present to Walpole was that the head of the government should have commanding influence in the House of Commons, and be a member of it. Pelham's administration lasted until his death in 1754. It narrowly escaped shipwreck almost before it left port. Carteret, thinking himself the ablest man in the Cabinet,

again become the centre of affairs. Carteret and Polham were his neighbours, and from their windows watched the bustle at his door. "I know you all go to Lord Orford," Carteret said, "he has more company than any of us—do you think I can't go too?" As we shall see, he did go. The struggle between Carteret and the Polhams was in one respect a counterpart of that which went on for the first twenty-three years of the reign of George III, and marked the strenuous effort of the king to break the dominion of the Whig families. In another aspect it was a question of the coherency of Cabinets and the authority of the House of Commons. Carteret ignored the Cabinet, where he was outvoted by four to one, and he practically renounced the Cabinet system. A wit said of him that he would do better if he studied Parliament more and Demosthenes less. These, and his rash and unsound schemes in foreign policy, apart from all old memories, were good grounds why Walpole should never lend him the weight of his support.

Walpole throughout this difficult time behaved like a man of honour and a faithful public servant. "The king," says Horace Walpole, "is not less obliged to Lord Orford for the defence of his crown, now he is out of place, than when he was in the administration. His zeal, his courage, his attention, are indefatigable and incon-

coivable. He regards his own life no more than when it was most his duty to expose it, and fears for everything but that."¹ When the king and Carteret were sorely pressed by the thunders of Pitt and Chesterfield against the Hanoverian troops, as well as by the tricks and vacillations of the Pelhams, it was Walpole who by the energy of his persuasion induced his friends to support the royal measures. He had sat for two years in the House of Lords without addressing them, but on an occasion (February 1744) when he thought they were neglecting certain information laid before them about the Pretender, he suddenly rose and made one of his finest and most animated speeches.² He had not quailed before ministers when they were intriguing and hunting him out of power, and he braved unpopularity now, that they might use their power for the public good. The same men were playing the same game against Carteret, as Carteret and they together had played against him. If any one asks how Walpole's position had been more defensible towards his colleagues in the old Cabinet, than Carteret's was now, the answer is simple; Walpole had a majority in the House of Commons, and when he lost his majority, he gave up his post. Carteret never had a majority, he had not even a party. The Duke of Newcastle, said the king, is grown as jealous of Lord Granville (Carteret's new title) as he was of Lord Orford, and wants

politics, for he was the man who had made the motion only three years before, that Walpole should be removed from the king's counsels for ever. Walpole discouraged reliance on Granville, as he had systematically done in the days of Queen Caroline, and sent messages to urge the king to abide by the wishes of the majority in the Cabinet. After an excruciating journey he found himself at Arlington Street. All the politicians flocked to his house, and thought he must speedily be minister again.

The political battle was settled, as Walpole would have had it settled, against Granville. The Pelham interest, aided by the influence of Walpole, was preponderant in the House of Commons, and this was now the decisive consideration. The boroughmongers had forced the king to give up Walpole, and now they forced him to give up Granville. They patched up a coalition with the patriots, humoured Pitt and eventually overcame the king's reluctance to admit him to office, and formed that Broad-Bottomed administration from which every national blessing was fondly expected. Before many months had elapsed an insurrection broke out in the royal closet. The ministers tried to coerce the king by bringing seals, staves, keys, and commissions, and resigning in a body. Granville and Bath attempted to form an administration (March 1746). It lasted, as the wits

gotten one little point, and that was to secure a majority in either House of Parliament. The old band returned in triumph. Granville laughed and drank, owned it was mad, but would do it again to-morrow. He was even daring and senseless enough to advise the king to go down to Westminster, and remonstrate from the throne with Lords and Commons assembled, against the usage that he had received. These were the men who had led the opposition to the great administration of Walpole.

To him the drama, in which he had long played a part so staunch, so manly, and so serviceable to his country and to Europe, was no longer an object of concern. He subjected himself to extraordinary and terrible treatment for his cruel malady, bore its torments with fortitude, retained his clearness of judgment to the end, and at length with little pain expired on March 18, 1745. His remains were conveyed from Arlington Street to Houghton, where they rest, like those of Edmund Burke at Beaconsfield, without commemorative monument or name.